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EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT  
4<sup>TH</sup> GREN<sup>DE</sup> GUARDS







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EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT













*Edward Wyndham Tennant*



Broog.

EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT  
A Memoir by his Mother PAMELA GLENCONNER  
WITH PORTRAITS IN PHOTOGRAVURE

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## DEDICATION

*Emboldened by the thought of Bim's spirit of good-fellowship, and recalling that his first thought is ever to share his own, I would dedicate this Memoir to all those Mothers who have suffered the same loss. They will forgive the imperfections, and all I have found good to tell of my son here, they will feel to be most true of theirs.*

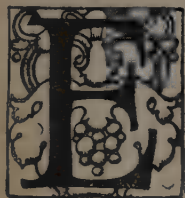
*May the Light of Comfort shine on them.*







## INTRODUCTION



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT was born at Stockton House in Wiltshire, on the 1st July, 1897. He was educated at West Downs, and then at Winchester, which he left one year earlier than is cus-

tomary, for it had been decided that he should lodge with a family in Germany, to learn the language. This was to be in preparation for the Diplomatic Service; and so at the age of seventeen, when the war broke out, he found himself quit of his school, and free to offer his service, which he did on the instant, joining the Grenadier Guards. He has the distinction of being the youngest Wykehamist to take up arms in defence of his country, and it became at once evident how congenial to him was a soldier's life.

"Is it any comfort to you," writes a brother officer, "to know how we all loved him in the regiment? His spirits never failed him, and in all the correspondence sent to the Orderly Room which had any reference to him, all spoke of him in the highest terms."

"He was the most loved and popular boy I have ever known," writes another, "and we shall all feel his loss terribly. I am sure he died with the same cheerful courage with which he always lived."

In August, 1915, after a year's training in London, he went to Bovingdon Green Camp, Marlow, where his



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

company of signallers earned distinction. "My signallers were inspected yesterday," he wrote to his Mother, "and I was told by the Captain they did me credit; I am very happy about it." On account of his efficiency as an officer he had the honour of being especially selected to go out to France, although Brigade Orders had just been issued that no one should leave England before nineteen years of age. He served one year in France, during which time he had two periods of home leave, and he passed to the Fuller Life in the Battle of the Somme, on the 22nd September, 1916.

*"There are they that have left a name behind them, so that their praise might be reported."*



## CONTENTS

### MEMOIR :

	PAGE
DEDICATION . . . . .	v
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vii
EARLY CHILDHOOD . . . . .	7
CHILDHOOD . . . . .	21

### POETRY WRITTEN IN CHILDHOOD

	31
A HYMN . . . . .	35
SPRING . . . . .	35
THE LUCKY DREAM . . . . .	36
THE NIGHT ATTACK . . . . .	36
FIRELAND . . . . .	37
A BIRTHDAY POEM . . . . .	38
A BALLAD . . . . .	39
THE BALLAD OF MACDONALD AND MACDUFF . . . . .	40
THE WISHING WELL . . . . .	41
OBERON . . . . .	42
THE PLAY OF ROBERT THE BRUCE . . . . .	43
THE GIPSY KING . . . . .	43
THE PIRATE KING'S SONG . . . . .	45
SECOND SONG OF THE PIRATE KING . . . . .	45
A FACE . . . . .	46
A BIRTHDAY . . . . .	46
A CALL TO BATTLE . . . . .	48



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

	PAGE
SCHOOLDAYS . . . . .	49
LATER SCHOOL DAYS (1911-1914) . . . . .	83
FRANCE . . . . .	123
ON LEAVE . . . . .	155
SOME LETTERS . . . . .	245

## POEMS BY E. W. T.:—

DEDICATION TO P. G. AND G. W. . . . .	279
WORPLE FLIT . . . . .	280
PICTURES . . . . .	284
THE GAZEBO . . . . .	285
THE KNIGHT AND THE RUSSET PALMER . . . . .	286
SONG . . . . .	291
THE MAD SOLDIER . . . . .	292
TO ROY . . . . .	294
IN MEMORIAM . . . . .	295
THE NIGHTINGALE . . . . .	296
HOME THOUGHTS IN LAVENTIE . . . . .	306
APPENDICES . . . . .	309
A FRAGMENT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY . . . . .	312
"FLOWER OF THE FIELD" . . . . .	321



## LIST OF PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS

EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT (by John Sargent, R.A.)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
BIM, AGED ONE YEAR, 1898 . . . . .	<i>To face page</i> 9
E. W. T., FIVE YEARS OLD . . . . .	23
EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT . . . . .	116
EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT . . . . .	157
EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT, 4TH GRENADEIR GUARDS	171
EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT, 1916 . . . . .	202







“The Bow saith to the Arrow,  
‘Thy freedom is mine.’”

TAGORE.







# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## CHAPTER I



THOSE who knew Bim will never forget him. He had a distinctive character and rare charm. He numbered more friends, and had more friendship to give them than is usual, and to every aspect of life he brought a sympathy and a degree of insight that were the direct outcome of his singularly loving heart.

His sense of humour was infallible. He not only made excellent jokes, but appreciated those of others, and he held a flow of anecdote and quotation in a retentive memory, that he used with a remarkable gift of apposite application, that appeared never to fail.

The activity of his wit was like the play of summer lightning; it irradiated without searing the object of his mirth. In an eminent degree he had what has been called "the sunshine of the mind," and behind it were those deep recesses of a gentle nature, that never failed to respond to those who sought them.

Bim's presence banished the common and the disagreeable things of life, and brought with it a sense of freshness and vigour.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

"I am sure," writes a friend, "that he died with the same marvellous vitality and courage, and love of beautiful things, that always actuated him."

"He was to me the gayest, happiest, most crystal-clear person in the world," writes another. "Had one been in the depths of depression, he would have inspired one with joy."

To quote further from these letters would make an introductory chapter too long. They shall have a place later in this volume. It seemed to Bim's Mother as she received these tributes to his memory from his friends and from hers, that no one could ever praise him too highly, nor say too much to convey what he had been in their lives. Yet even her expectation has been surpassed, and she realises in how great a measure all who met Bim were influenced by his sincerity and his charm.

"He had a beautiful mind, so clever, and so simple, and sincere; he is happy, I am sure, in his high-hearted ways."

When the mind is subtle it is unusual to find simplicity the keynote of character. Yet there was this rare combination in Bim. He was as candid as the skies. This was shown in his excellent hand-grip, his firm and open stride, and the unfailing benevolence in his countenance.

It was said once by Disraeli of Bim's maternal Grandmother, that "she had that most rare thing—a musical laugh." Bim inherited this characteristic; "*Le rire fidèle prouve un cœur sans détour*"; his laugh rang clear and free. In appearance he was tall, with distinc-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

tion of bearing. He showed race in his hands, which were slender and finely drawn, with singularly well-shaped nails.

His brow and eyes dominated his countenance, and were of peculiar beauty. When Mr. Sargent was making the study of Bim in charcoal, reproduced as frontispiece to this book, he remarked on the sensitive drawing he found in the lines of the eyelids, and on the unusual manner in which the hair grew, springing in two arches from a point in the middle of the brow.

In social life Bim had a simplicity of address and a warmth of manner that arose equally from his entire freedom from self-consciousness, and from the genuine and invariably great pleasure it was to him to be surrounded by his friends. His parties, to give which delighted him, excelled. He had that peculiar gift that defies analysis, but which guarantees to its possessor in every social venture success that is instant, cumulative and secure.

These social gatherings were arranged with a characteristic precipitancy, sometimes owing to the exigency of time, invitations being often carried out by telephone, while the earlier invited guests were already streaming through the door, tacitly reminding their host of innumerable others who must be invited too. People have been known to rise from their beds to which they had already repaired, dress anew, and hasten gladly, if late to the festive scene.

“He was the best and dearest of companions! Shall we ever see such unstinted generosity, and such un-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

failing spirits again? He has left nothing but loving and heroic memories."

It has been said that it is no true religion that is of a desponding cast of thought. If this is so then Bim's religion was of the very best. His spiritual outlook was never dimmed by doubt. He had complete and unassailable confidence in God, and this never wavered.

He wrote to his Mother before the Battle of Loos, "I have the feeling of Immortality very strongly. I think of Death with a light heart, and as a friend, whom there is no need to fear."

Bim's love for those who belonged to him, and for his home, was of so deep a quality that it is impossible to believe that so constant and vital a love should die. He himself was convinced of continuity, and never doubted that we should live through Death.

Indeed to those who knew him, the very thought of Bim, now as before, means *Life*; and even in the moments of supreme suffering, moments that make long years, his Mother finds it in her heart to thank God for the life of her son.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD



“ A face with gladness overspread,  
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred,  
And seemliness complete, that sways  
Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;  
With no restraint but such as springs  
From quick and eager visitings  
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach  
Of thy few words of English speech.  
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife  
That gives thy gestures grace and life ;  
So have I, not unmoved in mind,  
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind  
Thus beating up against the wind.”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.









*Bim, aged one year, 1898.*



## CHAPTER II

*"You know how Urbino died? it is a mark of God's great goodness, but a bitter grief to me."*

MICHAEL ANGELO.



BIM wrote poetry early. Before he could write he dictated rhymes and verses to his Mother, whose pencil could barely keep pace with the flow of verse, story, saga, and adventure that sped from his active brain. He ran before he could walk, and he knew many words at nine months old. He would sustain a conversation at eighteen months of age with eager delight and fluent mis-pronunciations. The word he learnt first to say was "happy," and this he would sing, repeating it joyously as he was carried along, his little hands fluttering in vivacious gaiety. He was the soul of activity without restlessness, and from the earliest days of consciousness every gesture scintillated with eager life.

*Child's life*

"The sparkling wit, the lightning whim,  
The diamond rays that make up—Bim,"

wrote one who had been enslaved by his charm in the nursery. From quite early days his wish seemed to be to amuse the world, and if he could do any one a service or promote their happiness, he was doubly content.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

In and out he ran, during an entire afternoon, over the threshold of a cottage, drawing and carrying water for the shepherd's wife. His Mother can still hear those nimble footsteps, and the pleased reiteration, "Sae active! Sae active! I never saw the like o' yon child."

L Bim taught himself to read; it came easily to him. That is to say when his Mother began to teach him she found he knew all his letters, and could read and spell words of one syllable. This was because he was always putting letters together, and making words of them, as a game. He used to draw animated alphabets, in which the letters were given pairs of little boots to wear, tiny hats with feathers in them, or small flags to carry. His Mother has one before her now, as she writes; the letters have each a distinct personality, and they hurry along after each other over the page, full of gesture and movement.

He drew with lightning rapidity, and with his left hand; as he developed he was trained to use his right but he remained ambidextrous, and unusually adroit. At four years old he not only could, but constantly did, occupy himself simultaneously with three activities. He would thrust a book into his Mother's hands, with a request to be read to; then he would settle down to draw, which he did rapidly, the pencil in his left hand, while he spun an ivory counter with his right thumb and finger.

A governess, who tried to repress this exuberance on the score of inculcating concentration, said: "I find it

10



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

very difficult to correct this in him, because I cannot truthfully say it prevents his doing any one thing well."

Bim was charming to those in authority over him. A rule had been made, perhaps unnecessarily, that the children if they awoke early were to remain in bed until the nursery governess appeared. In summer holidays however, with the Sun himself calling them, this proved more than could be rationally expected. Yet it was not in Bim's nature to break a rule with effrontery. He was up and dressed, and safely away long before the recognised hour, but a small square of paper was left, pinned upon the pillow. It bore the pretty message, "pardonnez-moi, chérie Zelle."

While Bim was yet a very little child some one read from the daily papers an account of a picnic party, the members of which had been drowned during the day's expedition in a yacht.

"Were they going to it, or coming back?" he asked with anxious brow. "Had they *had* their picnic, I mean?"

It was a relief to be able to say this was so, and to see him smile again.

To Bim, happiness was a state of being essential not only to himself but to all. He could not tolerate imagining or perceiving this state of mind imperilled or destroyed. It was his soul's true climate; and his devotion to the memory of Charles I, and Don Quixote, arose, in early childhood, from a sense of outrage at the untoward trend of their earthly lot.

["I remember," writes one, "seeing Bim running

Life & Death (can)

(83) Happiness



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

fleetly at one year old, saying '*happy, happy, happy.*' I saw very little of him in after years, but when I met him again I found him just as lovable."

When his Mother visited among the poorer streets of Westminster, he could only be prevailed on to cross those darkened thresholds by being given a large tin of sweets that he might distribute largesse as he went. He left the children in little throngs and clusters, smiling in his wake. He was often concerned and puzzled when he became aware of the difference between their Christmas joys and his own. "But does God know about it?" he would ask, with one finger emphasising his remark, a gesture his Mother grew to know so well. Finally he went no more with her, for his heart suffered, and he was too wise to think that either toys, sweets, clothes, kindly interest, or money, could ever gloss over such surroundings.

Children are, as a rule, too elfin and self-centred to be compassionate, but Bim always understood the sorrows of others, for the time they were his own.

"You know the most beautiful lilies in all the village grow in Mr. Eyres' garden," he once told his Mother; and added with inexpressible gentleness: "and Mr. Eyres is blind."

He had a most engaging way as a small child of addressing his questions, or making his remarks, with an inclination of the head. This gave great point and civility to his manner, and for so high-spirited a child he had an unusual gravity of address.

"How do we know that we live after we die?" he



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

once asked his Mother, "is it that Jesus once told a man who then told his son, and this man told his son, who told his son again, and then again *his* son, so that at last Daddy's father told Daddy, and Daddy tells me? Tell me, for I long to know——" This, all in a rapid pelt of utterance, with nothing to lead to it, but his own thoughts, as he sat playing with his toys.

One day a lady was sitting talking to his Mother, a lady in whose garden he had played; a garden of yew hedges, and massed flowers, and vine-grown pergolas and green terraces on which paced Juno's birds. Bim was so very young that his Mother was about to remind him of the days he had spent with her there; but he needed none of this. He stood fixedly before the lady, a small figure of three years old.

"And how are your peacocks' tails growing?" he asked pleasantly. The question was accompanied by his little bow.

He spent many happy weeks before he was six years old with a kind and most indulgent friend, by the sea-side. He enjoyed these visits mightily, everything being arranged for his delight. "I think this is the House of Wish," he said with enthusiasm; "everything you wish for comes true." He loved Peter the dog, and the butler with the unusual name of Pinion, and the dry pine-needle-strewn floor of the neighbouring fir-woods where he gathered cones for his friend's fire.

On his return home, a conversation was overheard between him and his sister, to whom Bim had been describing his visit; particularly did he dilate on the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

kindness of his hostess, a friend of such long standing that she had known Bim's Mother as a little girl. "I suppose," said his sister, summing up the conversation, "you'll marry Mrs. — when you are a man." An unusual measure of silence followed this remark. Bim appeared faced with a dazzling possibility. "I shouldn't be allowed to, should I?" He said it in a hushed voice.

In a public garden he saw one day an ornate semicircle of interlaced woodwork, highly varnished, making an archway to a garden path. It claimed attention without repaying it.

"Do you think the people who made this garden didn't want to forget Jesus' crown of thorns?" Bim asked, in solution of his own questioning thought.

He ever found beauty readily, bringing his own wealth of insight to whatever it might be, and shedding on all alike his radiance, enriching even the common-place with his own heart's gold.

He was sleeping one night with his Mother, and as she entered the room he turned on his pillow. "Isn't it nice?" he murmured.

"What?"

"Well—*everything*."

This was his normal attitude of mind. Contentment, and more, gratitude whole-heartedly expressed; ever ready to respond to happy circumstances, and failing to find them, he would create them for others and himself. "Well, anyhow, we caught something shaped rather like a fish," he said in early days of the nursery after a dis-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

appointing afternoon of barren effort, when two hours of tedious expectancy had resulted in nothing being drawn from the water except a narrow stick.

“ You do like Alice, don’t you ? ” he asked fervently. “ You do like her ? ” Alice was a new servant, so his Mother answered in perhaps guarded praise. Bim however concluded the conversation in his own manner— “ So witty,” he said.

When he was three or four years old he had a way of singing to himself while he was playing, improvising the words. His Mother remembers one startling fragment :

“ And so looking under  
We saw the bandsman’s head.  
Where was his body ?  
In the queen’s bed.”

He had a doll called Molly Easter, whose beauty was never questioned, though her nose had been kissed flat and her eyebrows obliterated. He had a family of stuffed monkeys, with their hands clasping a fruit before them, with red caps on and bead teeth. The two chief monkeys of this nursery bribe were called Huckaback and Bombazine, and these were sewn up again and again, patched and strengthened, often by his own hands, when they began to go the way of all earthly material. Bim showed constancy in his affection for his toys ; the favourites were all those of long standing. Words appealed to him ; he showed delight on first hearing the word Alleluia, exclaiming what an excellent name it would be for a monkey.

“ What shall I do with all my life ? ” his nurse heard him say one night as he was half asleep.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He often dictated poems, walking up and down the room, to his Mother, before he could write. "Oberon" was given in this way, and one or two of the others; but his childish verse for the most part was written down by him phonetically, lying on the floor with his chin supported by one elbow, and the fingers of his left hand with the pencil in it tapping out the syllables on the floor, to get the scansion.

He always found it difficult to criticise detrimentally either places, people, or things. He never found fault gratuitously, and if he had to admit failure he would balance it with far-sought praise. If he heard blame, his impulse was to extenuate, and this even when the subject did not touch his affection or his interests nearly. I remember the conversation once touching on the inmates of a little red-turreted, God-forgotten villa that they had erected; and this among some of the very choicest folds of the grey-green Downs.

"But if they don't *know* it is so ugly, it isn't so bad of them, is it?"

Surely this was advanced thinking for a child; and the best kind of thought, arising from the heart. Bim was never only clever; his actions and remarks were the fruit of feeling, and as King Solomon has it, "the law of kindness was in his tongue."

"It isn't very good of you," his Mother remembers him saying, "to think crocodiles so ugly." He spoke in a grieved tone. "But there are many animals, even reptiles, that are more beautiful, you would say?"



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ Yes—but the crocodiles with their big mouths . . . it must be lovely when they smile. . . .”

He was very ready, as a small child, to quote and apply. The nursery maid used to sing a country song that had some such lines as these :

“ Poor Robin is dead, and laid in his grave,  
H’m—ha—laid in his grave ;  
There grew an old apple tree over his head,  
H’m—ha—over his head. . . .”

This song continues through many verses till the patient hearer is told :

“ So Robin got up with a hippity hop,  
H’m—ha—hippity hop ;  
When there came an old woman to gather them up  
H’m—ha—gather them up ;”

It was Easter morning, and Bim was heard singing cheerfully :

“ So Jesus arose with a hippity hop,  
H’m—ha—hippity hop ;  
With all the good angels to gather Him up,  
H’m—ha—gather Him up. . . .”

On looking back it is satisfactory to remember no one corrected him for this.

Later, when he was about ten years old, a large party of cousins had assembled in the house with their respective governesses. Schoolroom tea was a cheerful meal, and “ How they do talk !” remarked some one who had heard the tumult.

“ Yes,” said Bim, “ and do you know who talks the most ? Miss ——. I’ve heard her at supper, leading the clanging rookery home !”



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He knew his "Pilgrim's Progress" from cover to cover. He used to act scenes from it sometimes with the younger children, sometimes alone. His Mother remembers seeing him, on one occasion, wondrously attired. He had wound the bath towel round his brown holland pinafore. He had tied the sponge bag to his side for a wallet, and had a tall pole in his hand for a staff. On his back was strapped a bundle of the most various objects, tied up in a towel. He was walking bent almost double with his load, and saying: "Then feared I lest my sin should sink me deeper than the grave"; and in a lower tone, "that's Hell of course."

His activity was inexhaustible. One of his earliest remarks was, "Sunday is such a non-doing day." Yet he far preferred his own wayward leisure; his energy was not readily applied to tasks. "Oh, I wish I knew a land where there were no lessons, and all the governesses were dead."

He was at a child's party entertaining a little girl who sat beside him:

"Would you like me to empty my pocket and show you the motley throng?"

He was nimble-witted and original in his sense of humour, and large-hearted and gentle towards other children in his ways. He never teased or fought, and very early was his gift of the use of words evident.

He was once told only Love was a free gift. "Only Love, the story says, can you get without money. But I would say three things." And after a moment's pause he said softly, "Love, a rose, and Paradise."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

It seemed as if there were nothing further to say ; but it was advanced that a rose was bought from a shop, and that hoes and spades had to cultivate it, and besides there was the gardener to reckon with. Bim was sitting playing with some wooden bricks on the floor beside him, balancing very carefully the wooden toys.

“ Not the wild roses,” his Mother heard him answer—his voice could be peculiarly contented in the intonations : “ the wild roses come to us for nothing.”

He had a genius for sentiment, an extraordinary capacity for love.

“ Sometimes after I am in bed, I hear your step in the passage, and it is the step of Heaven to me.”

No parents ever received such worship ; it was so far above their deserts that they can tell of it even without humility, for that would imply appropriation. They feel only a loving recognition of the beauty and the wonder of it, just as one may wonder at the perfect design of a flower, or the light on a butterfly’s wing.

*“ We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”*

---

And now let this chapter on Bim’s early childhood close with an account of one so akin to his that it might have been written of Bim.

It is told in the distinguished English of the seventeenth century, worthy of such a theme.\*

\* From The Golden Book of St. John Chrysostom, translated by John Evelyn and published in 1659.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ Pictures did afford him infinite pleasure, above all pen and ink with which he did now begin to form his letters. He often delighted himself in reciting poems and sentences, and indeed he had an ear curiously framed to sounds. To all I might add the incomparable sweetness of his countenance and eyes, the clean fabric of his body, and pretty addresses. How easily he forgot injuries when at any time I would break or cross his passions by sometimes interrupting his enjoyments, that I might thereby render him the more indifferent to all things. But above all, extremely conspicuous was his affection towards his younger brothers, with whose impertinencies he would continually bear.

He was ever so smiling, cheerful, and in perfect good humour. He would frequently in his ordinary discourse come out with such expressions as one would have admired how he came by them. More I could still say, but my teares mingle so faste with my inke, that I must break off here, and be silent. God be gracious unto me, here endes the joy of my lyfe. The Lord Jesus sanctifye this, and all my other afflictions.”



## CHILDHOOD



“Now am I once more a good and happy child,” said Sintram joyfully, “only that the merciful God has given me in addition the strength of a man in body and in spirit.

“O how blessed is that son to whom it is allowed to gladden his Mother’s heart with the blossom and the fruit of his life.”

DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ.









*E. W. T. five years old.*



### CHAPTER III

*"This treasure."*



BIM wrote his verse so instinctively and so unselfconsciously that he never knew till years later that his doing so had aroused interest in a wider circle than immediately surrounded him. His uncle George Wyndham, from whom Bim had his name, delighted in this early verse. A selection from the childish poetry will be found at the end of this chapter.

HÔTEL BURLINGTON, DOVER, 1906.

"Your letter with an account of the children's sayings reached me to-night. They did me good. Always let me know what they are saying. I wanted something like that, for electioneering is grisly work. In church one can always go out 'before the serpent,' but in Politics, one not only suffers from it, but so often inflicts it.

Bim's lines to you that you send me show a rare power over English rhythm, and a quality still more rare of getting strength from the short English line.

I say in all seriousness that Gray and Tennyson alone give the model for that 'tour de force' in solemn verse. In farcical verse many can excel with the short line. Samuel Butler in 'Hudibras,' for instance. Yet Byron,



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

after practising it, despaired of, and ridiculed the octosyllabic line.

‘But I’ve a joy that have few other,  
This lovely woman is my Mother.’

That is remarkable for strength, which lies in its complete simplicity. The clinch with grammar secured without breaking the rhythm.

‘I know a face, a lovely face,  
As full of beauty as of grace.’

That has the liquid diction which Matthew Arnold claimed for the note of Chaucer.

To be liquid and dynamic, to be a stream, a lovely stream, *and* turn a mill, is the peculiar claim of English verse. If that can be done, all is done that English can do. Landor, with all his learning, lives by ‘Rose Aylmer.’ Fitzgerald, who translated Spanish and learned Persian in middle age to yet enlarge his field of culture, and who stored his mind with philosophy, lives by—

‘The moving finger writes, and having writ  
Moves on, nor all your piety nor wit,  
Can lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.’

That is liquid. And something said. A fresh utterance; and that is what Bim has, in these lovely lines of his. ‘Fresh utterance for the Everlasting’ is the secret of the Universe and therefore of Poetry, which must be universal, or it is an impertinence. . . .

G. W.”



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

I feel no hesitation in giving one or two further letters from the same pen ; they are hardly irrelevant even if they do not deal immediately with the subject of this slight memoir, because in character and mentality Bim had so much in common with his uncle. They were stones quarried from the same hillside. They cared for the same things, romance and chivalry made a strong appeal to them, alike they answered to the call of the Past. Together they trusted the Future, and it was their mutual confidence in human nature that often betrayed them in their judgment of mankind. In temporal matters they might be easily astray, for they consistently saw the world as they would have it, but of esoteric values they held the key. This likeness, moreover, was not only shown in the sphere of mind and impulse. It was in their gestures as well ; it was in their laugh, and social bearing, in the lines of eye and brow, in the carriage of the head, and in general demeanour.

SAIGHTON GRANGE, CHESTER, 1906.

*[From the same.]*

“ . . . Misdoubting the Christmas post I am writing to-day to send you my love. This has been a full year for me, and for you too. Looking back on it, I have no complaint to make. Life is astonishingly interesting and only sometimes laborious, and for my part, I always feel as if I were looking on at it all, with myself (or one of my selves) cast for a part in the play. And at the end of the year I applaud the Author.

I hunted to-day, and had a good gallop, leaving



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

nothing but dull care in the ditches behind me. Give my love to all your darlings.

Your devoted brother

G. W."

HÔTEL BURLINGTON, DOVER.

"... I am working away with a cold at the top and the bottom of my lung. The only true recompense for giving oneself to politics is to know and love so many people one would never have known otherwise. How lovable they are! and how sad it all is, except for the love it engenders which must outlive the hate. Life is only intelligible as a grim machine for grinding out Courage and Love. Of course there is fun too, but these are highly manufactured articles, and in view of their exquisite finish we must not mind how raw, the raw material may be. The æsthete calls them crude, but they are raw. Life is raw, not crude, and only a great deal of cooking, and skill, can make it palatable. Only the mills of God grinding slowly can produce these beautiful results."

[*From the same.*]

1908.

"... I have just opened your letter which begins 'how are you, I wonder? and what are you doing?' And I answer: 'If you please, Ma'am, I've been to Venice.' Just like that. Been to Venice. Well, I went there, all of a sudden last Wednesday week. Percy had twelve days free between camp and manœuvres. We were here on Tuesday week. I telegraphed for tickets, and away. We whirled in the train through a continuous welter of



storm to the Swiss frontier. There the clouds lifted. We glided up the Simplon Pass, bored through the tunnel at the top, 21½ minutes, and soared out beneath an ultramarine sky, into floods of hot sunlight, steeped in the incense of pines, and so down the valleys of ripe maize, past Lake Maggiore to Milan, then to the left, or east, through plains of fruit or more maize, past Lake Garda (which is Shelley, at his best), through Verona, over the marshes, and then for two miles along the narrow Causeway across the Lagoon. It is the sea, though shallow, with the station at Venice. Fifteen yards from the station we stepped into the yacht's launch and twirled along the S. of the canal for the best part of two miles to the yacht, and anchored off the point of Del Salute. From that moment we had 5½ days and six nights of sheer magic. I hired a gondola. We saw—not all—but much of the glories. We bathed every day in the Adriatic from the far shore of the Lido. We read in the words of Villeharduin—who was there—how the Crusaders took their oaths, and prevailed on Dandolo to find them ships, and how they took Constantinople in 1204. We ended by giving a great dinner on the yacht's upper deck to all who had been kind to us, in a pavilion of flags. And then—we whirled back past the Lakes and over the Alps, and across France, and the Channel and once more here I am. I will tell you more of all this if you ask for it; for the moment I only say that I am full-filled with sun and sea and moonlight and the stars, and palaces, and Tintoretto, and Antonio Rizzi, and the 'piccoli Canali' and the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Normans (who carved runes on a lion at the Piræus in 1040) and the Crusaders.

Your devoted brother,

GEORGE WYNDHAM."

Here is one of his letters to the children.

HÔTEL BURLINGTON, DOVER,

19th July, 1905.

" . . . I was delighted with the picture of Sir Perceval. It was very refreshing to find him on my table one night after a long day in the House of Commons. I admire his helmet and his charger, and am glad that his esquire is dressed in green. I should have been very happy if I had lived in those days riding through forests in quest of adventure. The kind of trouble given by dragons, for instance, was not nearly so tiresome as the kind of trouble given nowadays by quite ordinary people. And there was this merit in dragons that they were always killed by the right person just in the nick of time. This also applies to Bim's spirited sketch of Hansome Hall's truculent sword-thrust. He knew how to get rid of the kind of people who are in the way—'Hey diddle diddle, Pink him in the middle' was his plan. What a good one! But nowadays the people who ought to have swords stuck through them do not wear black visors. It is, therefore, harder to distinguish them from members of Parliament and other respectable bodies. But nobody could mistake a dragon. They had to be killed. And the distressed damozel was always beautiful and grateful to the knight who delivered her. I wish we could hope to



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

see these clear distinctions between dragons and, say, bishops re-established. Then we should know how to behave to both. Well, although I laugh about this I really love all these stories about knights. It is right to love them and know them well. For they teach us a great deal. I never go out for a long ride over downs or through a forest without wishing that I could be back in those days. I should feel more at home in them. But I do not expect it; I only wish it and try to make these days as like them as I can.

It is uphill work, particularly when one finds the kind of note-paper on which I am writing. Still if you look at the Arms of Dover you will see some pleasing animals with boats instead of tails; a beautiful ship, and a picture of St. Martin, a soldier-saint, cutting off half his cloak to give it to a beggar. St. Martin lived at Tours in France long ago. He was—though he did not know it—one of the first knights: a Roman soldier who was very kind as well as very brave. He became a Christian. But he gave half his cloak to the beggar before he had quite made up his mind to be baptized.

Your most loving uncle,

GEORGE."

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

[*From the same.*]

*August, 1911.*

"... I loved your letter more than I can say, and all the more because my birthday is not till the 29th. That shows that your letter belonged to Eternity and not to



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Time, and that it was an answer to the wish of my heart. Our subliminal selves were communing.

All these days I have felt the tragic touch that is never absent when reality and deep instincts take the place of 'what is usual.'

I have been happy in my work, but sad in all else, very sad. But also quite sure that it is an evil for men to vote against their convictions, and almost a greater evil for them 'to wash their hands' like Pontius Pilate. But I must not trouble you with my sadness. I welcome your love to-day more than ever and thank you for the lovely lightly woven rug. You say it is called a 'Slumber-Rug.' That is what I need.

Never more than now your devoted brother,

G. W."

These two, Bim and his uncle, were alike we say? Yes; but one upon the rack of this tough world was stretched out longer.



POETRY WRITTEN IN CHILDHOOD



*I DEDICATE THIS*  
*TO*  
*MY MOTHER*

*"Who picked me up when I fell,  
And kissed the place to make it well."*



E.W.T.

# A FACE.

I KNOW A FACE, A LOVELY  
FACE, AS FULL  
OF BEAUTY AS OF GRACE.  
A FACE OF PLEASURE  
EVER BRIGHT, IN UTTER D-  
-ARKNESS, IT GIVES  
LIGHT. A FACE THAT IS IT-  
-SELF LIKE JOY.  
TO HAVE SEEN IT WERE A  
LUCKY BOY. BUT  
I'VE A JOY, THAT HAVE FEW  
OTHER, THIS LOVELY WOMAN  
IS MY MOTHER







## A HYMN

God the Father, God the Son,  
God the Spirit, Three in One,  
I thank Thee for what Thou hast done, O Lord.

God so loving, God so good,  
Who feedest me with Heavenly food,  
Who lovest me when out of mood, O Lord.

## SPRING

WHEN lovely snowdrops leave their beds,  
And timid squirrels show their heads,  
When cowslips nod upon the lea—  
Then it is Spring, as you may see.

And now it's Spring ! I, for one, will not stay,  
But off to the meadows I'll hasten away,  
For Summer is coming, and with it come flowers ;  
And in our small gardens we'll spend happy hours.

The lark is free,  
And happy are we,  
With the cowslip nodding upon the lea.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## THE LUCKY DREAM

WHEN walking beside the river  
A maiden saw I there ;  
Blue eyes and flowing mantle,  
White hands and golden hair.

She took me to her bower,  
Gave me a cup of wine,  
And then in accents sweet and clear  
Said, " Wilt thou now be mine ? "

Then into a deep sleep I fell,  
Wrapt in her mantle warm,  
And in a dream I saw her  
In all her proper form.

A ghastly hag she then appeared,  
With snakes about her hair ;  
She also had an awful beard  
Of hideousness quite rare.

Then up I started and I ran  
As quickly as I could,  
Until I fell down fainting  
Where you see me in this wood.

## THE NIGHT ATTACK

A POEM OF BRAVERY

As we sat round the camp fire  
Oh what is it we see ?  
The foe have made a night attack  
And shall we fight or flee ?



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

But no ! we will not flee  
Though troops we sorely lack,  
For it is not a soldier's deed  
To start and then turn back.

Just as our cowardly foe  
Were going to make a charge,  
Our friends came to our rescue  
And now our force is large.

We beat ! we beat ! we routed them,  
Our loss was very small ;  
And as we came back to the camp  
They cheered us, one and all.

*May, 1907.*

## FIRELAND

WHEN you look into the fire  
You see strange faces in galore,  
You see the fairies dance and scuttle,  
At play, or else at war.

Then you see the King's own castle  
In the midst of gardens grand,  
With his troop of Lords and Ladies,  
The finest in the land.

The pebbles are of amber,  
So lovely and so yellow,  
The flowers are of red and gold,  
So fiery and so mellow.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

The army of the Fire King  
Is very, very fine,  
And were it not of red-hot coal  
I wish that it were mine.

The navy of His Majesty  
That sails on seas of flame,  
The biggest ship a faggot,  
And "Coler" is her name.

And when the fire it burneth low,  
The King in fever lies ;  
And when the fire it goeth out,  
The whole of Fireland dies.

*March, 1907.*

## A BIRTHDAY POEM

God and Mother know each other,  
God loves Mummie as His Son :  
Every one that meets her loves her ;  
She her race in life has won.

She is very just and right,  
She is everyone's delight,  
She is full of love and grace ;  
A kind of flower of all the place.

To village children she gives toys  
And makes their life so full of joys ;  
To Mrs. Williams she gives a lot ;  
Mummie God's own love has got.  
Into her cup His love He's poured,  
She will have a great reward.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

She would never kill a mouse  
Though she were given the biggest house ;  
Angels shout North, South, and West  
To say that Mummie is the best ;  
Even the trees give her salutes,  
They seem to know who's near their roots.

She's very kind to all the poor,  
Each time they see her they love her more ;  
She doesn't care a bit for dress,  
She's a festoon of loveliness ;  
She is something quite divine,  
And joy, O joy, this Mother's mine.

## A BALLAD

THERE was a lord lived in this land  
And he had given his daughter's hand  
To him that e'en could slay the bull  
That made his heart of fear be full.

A knight rode up and pulled the bell,  
And with it made a mighty knell ;  
He then was told about the pest,  
And went at once to claim the quest.

He saw it, but no fear he felt,  
And blows of vigour on it dealt ;  
He clave a horn from off its head,  
It bellowed, but it was not dead.

He dealt it now a fatal wound  
That brought it stone-dead to the ground ;  
He marchéd back then full of pride,  
The lord was glad the bull had died.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

They then were married the same day,  
The streets were hung in colours gay,  
And gaffers by the fire they told  
How this young knight, so brave and bold,  
The daughter of their lord had won,  
And for their land a great deed done.  
Now harpers sing, and courtiers tell,  
Of how this anecdote befell.

## THE BALLAD OF MACDONALD AND MACDUFF

MacDONALD took his dirk,  
He vowed he'd rid the Clan  
Of his enemy MacDuff,  
That hard and cruel man.

CHORUS : *Do you hear that, you rascally Turk ?  
Remember MacDonald has got his dirk.*

MacDonald took his men  
And led them to the fray,  
And many a life was lost  
Upon that summer's day.

CHORUS : *Do you hear that, you rascally Turk ?  
Remember MacDonald has got his dirk.*

At last through the foes  
MacDonald he got,  
And fought with MacDuff  
Upon the spot.

CHORUS : *Do you hear that, you rascally Turk ?  
Remember MacDonald has got his dirk.*



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

MacDonald he thrust  
In his claymore,  
And he drew it out  
Covered with gore.

CHORUS : *Do you hear that, you rascally Turk ?  
Remember MacDonald has got his dirk.*

Proudly MacDonald  
Walkéd away,  
And there were rejoicings  
Upon that day.

CHORUS : *Do you hear that, you rascally Turk ?  
Remember MacDonald has got his dirk.*

## THE WISHING WELL

EVERY night when it is dark  
Comes there Nanny Cutty Sark,  
She strikes a birch wi' her magic stick,  
And frae it comes her friend, Auld Nick.

They walk upon the ferny brae  
Until the sun announces day.  
When auld Nick dashes through the bracken,  
The green leaves shrivel up and blacken.

Then Nanny beckons to a star,  
And mounted rides on it afar,  
Till next day everything is pretty  
While song birds chant their lovely ditty.

Then the next night she comes again,  
Whether it snow or hail or rain.  
But if one sprinkles water round  
She cannot come upon that ground.

*October, 1906.*



OBERON

OBERON ! Oberon ! King of the Fays,  
Sing to me one of thy fairy lays ;  
I have believed thee now many days,  
Oberon ! Oberon ! King of the Fays.

Thou flyest all through the dreary night,  
Led all the way by a glow-worm's light ;  
Thy coat is green, with a cap of pearl,  
Set round with gold and feather of merle.

A hedge-pig each side of His Majesty stands,  
To ward off spiders with prickly hands,  
And twelve little elves dressed all in green  
Playing at ball at his court are seen.

Queen Titania in a dress of white  
Goes to dine with the Northern Light ;  
She flies through the air in a chariot of gold,  
In a beautiful cloud the chariot is rolled.

Oberon ! Oberon ! King of the Fay,  
Let thy pixies and nixies dance our way,  
And they shall be feasted on strawberry-creams,  
And make their way home on the bright sun-beams.

I'll put cream in the corner for you and your band,  
And at times come and visit your beautiful land,  
For I have believed on thee now many days,  
Oberon ! Oberon ! King of the Fays.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## THE PLAY OF ROBERT THE BRUCE

ROBERT THE BRUCE in his room did stand.  
His sword was in his swarthy hand.

“What is that mine eyes do see?  
Comyn the Red, I think it be!”

And there a-standing by the bed,  
There stood the ghost of Comyn the Red!

“Ah, Traitor, I thought thou wert dead!”

*The Ghost speaks.*

“Although thou saw’st me laid in my grave  
I’ve now come back to thee, scurvy knave.  
And though you thought that I were dead,  
I’ll wreak my vengeance on your head!”

## THE GIPSY KING

THE gipsies they worked with might and main  
By the light of a very old lamp,  
Every night their tents were up,  
And there they made their camp.

They dug in Farmer Hayes’ field  
For treasure lost and won,  
But if old Hayes had come in sight  
They would have surely run.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

The chief he dug with pick and spade  
As hard as he could work O !  
A pot of gold he thought was there  
Under the ground did lurk O !

But as they worked with spade and pick,  
Just beyond they saw a bush—  
And in its claws a knife was held—  
A grisly ghost began to push.

His men they fled to their wigwams small  
At this dreary and horrible thing,  
The while the gipsy and ghost did fight,  
And the clang of steel did ring.

When just at that moment with a yell  
The ghost he made a plunge,  
He wounded the King in the left shoulder  
As he made a dreadful lunge.

When Robin-a-Mouse from a bush did spring  
With a Spanish knife in hand O !  
He was a follower of the King,  
The best in all the land O !

He sprang upon it unaware ;  
In his hand was a branch of thorn ;  
The ghost it fled, for the Demon it was,  
He'd seen both tail and horn.

The stick he had was the stick of a Saint,  
The staff of St. Dunstan was it,  
And it was a torch of holy fire  
St. Dunstan himself had lit.

They got the magic gold they did,  
For which they'd sought so long,  
For it had been hidden for a hundred years,  
And so I end my song.



THE PIRATE KING'S SONG

ON billows our fine "Saxon" rocks,  
And never on a rock we knock, knock, knock,  
And never on a rock we knock.

O! the life for me is on the Spanish Main,  
For Porto Bello will soon be ta'en,  
And there's money coming in sacks and vans,  
And we'll soon take it out of their hands.

On billows our fine "Saxon" rocks,  
And never on a rock we knock, knock, knock,  
And never on a rock we knock.

SECOND SONG OF THE PIRATE KING

I come, I come, from the Spanish Main!  
Yo ho! Yo ho!  
The Captain from Benbow you see again,  
Yo ho! Yo ho!

But I'm the one of a crew alive,  
That set to Sea with seventy-five,  
And that's why I come here again,  
Jolly and trim from the Spanish Main.

With my pockets full of pieces of eight  
I climbed up over Poverty's gate,  
And now I'm as happy as any lad,  
Though some of you think my life is bad.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

With cutlasses drawn and pistols shot,  
We throw our foes in a pit to rot,  
And now you may seek the world all over,  
But try as you will you won't catch Ralph Rover.

### A FACE

I KNOW a face, a lovely face,  
As full of beauty as of grace,  
A face of pleasure, ever bright,  
In utter darkness it gives light.  
A face that is itself like joy ;  
To have seen it I'm a lucky boy ;  
But I've a joy that have few other,  
This lovely woman is my MOTHER.

### A BIRTHDAY

HAIL ! Day on which our Queen was born  
To her be honour, praise, and love,  
Adored by all upon the Earth,  
Adored by all who dwell above.  
Beloved of rich, beloved of poor,  
Beloved of great and small,  
Beloved of many a Country side,  
Beloved of one and all !  
Hail Day ! Hail Day ! Hail blessed Day !  
On which our Queen was born ;  
The World is wrapt in gladness  
On that morning's happy Dawn.

*(To his Mother on her birthday, 1909.)*



# EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

TWELVE disciples had our Lord :  
You may trust Him, and His Word.

✱

ALONE in the World ; but why ?  
Is not Lord Jesus in the sky ?  
To Him His little lambs must go  
When troubled sore with awful woe.

✱

THE Rose and the Violet never are stale,  
They tell to the Christ-child a wonderful tale.

✱

AUTUMN is coming,  
And with it comes fun,  
Shooting at rabbits  
With rifle and gun.

Grouse shooting too,  
And pheasants come soon,  
When I'm off to the hills  
Of my own Scottish home.

I will tell you one thing  
Why I love my own hills,  
I can fish, I can shoot,  
I can drink from the rills.

And when years have passed  
And I'm wizen and old,  
My love for my Scotland  
Like iron will hold.



A CALL TO BATTLE

Who loves to follow me,  
For country and for king,  
This splendid land to free,  
That we may ever sing—

“ Old Scotland we have ransomed  
With targe and with claymore,  
And red the upturned battle-field  
With foreign traitor's gore.”

On every Scottish stronghold  
Will the lion rampant stand,  
And with clenched fist and unsheathed sword  
Prepare to save his land.

And all the gallant Highlanders,  
Who bravely fought and well,  
Will be revered by their country  
In Heaven or in Hell.



## SCHOOL DAYS



" I am a Spring—  
 Why square me with a kerb ?  
 Ah, why this measuring  
 Of marble limit ? why this accurate vault  
     Lest day assault,  
     Or any breath disturb ?  
 And why this regulated flow  
 Of what 'tis good to feel, and what to know ?  
     You have no right  
     To take me thus, and bind me to your use,  
     Screening me from the flight  
     Of all great wings that are beneath the Heaven ;  
 So that to me it is not given  
     To hold the image of the awful Zeus,  
     Nor any cloud or star,  
     Imprints me from afar.  
     O cruel force !  
     That gives me not a chance,  
     To fill my natural course ;  
     With mathematic rod,  
     Economising God.  
 Calling me to pre-ordered circumstance,  
 Nor suffering me to dance  
     Over the pleasant gravel  
     With music solacing my travel.

. . . . .  
 I am a Spring !  
 Why square me with a kerb ? "

T. E. BROWN.



## CHAPTER IV

*"A Winter's night is full of buds."*



BIM was educated at West Downs, and he remained closely attached to his master, Lionel Helbert. One of Bim's pleasures was to revisit his school, and every one connected with the place he held in

especial affection.

He was four years at West Downs. He was in the second eleven in 1909 and in the first eleven in 1910 and 1911. He was a good left-hand bowler, and in several matches bowled with success. He was a good shot, and shot for the school VIII in competitions and matches. His name is on the Chichester Shooting Shield, and on the bowling cup for 1911.

He was also joint editor of the "Hesperid," the school magazine, for which he wrote verse on several occasions.

He thoroughly enjoyed his life at West Downs, but leaving home for school was ever a heart-wrenching ordeal. This selection from early letters will show how complete happiness alternated with homesickness of profound degree.

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

" . . . Other people's Fathers and Mothers and sisters come very nearly every day, and I *shall* be proud when



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

mine come here. Miss Hills tells us ripping Red Indian stories. I have made a little dug-out which when finished I shall send to David. Miss Dix says my Prayer Book is too good to learn verses out of. Please bring me a nice Diabolo. I am 6th out of 9 in my class, your loving Bim."

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

"... I hope you are quite well? I am (I think) the happiest boy at West Downs. Thank you so much for the stamps."

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

"... I am now sure that I am one of the happiest boys at West Downs. There is but one blurr, and this is that you are not with me. But for that, I am jubilant. The tune that I have ever in my mind is : ' Make haste my soul, to live ! ' Give my love to everyone at home including the dogs. I am first in one thing, second in another, and 4th in two. With adoration, from Bim."

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

"... I hope you are quite well. Whenever I am at play and I hear a motor I say to myself : Now will that be Mummie? I am very happy here, but for all that I am looking forward to that happy day when I shall hear a motor, OUR motor, come rolling along with a beautiful face inside and a happy one outside, and then a short time afterwards two happy faces inside.

I sleep in the Chapel Dormitory. — is not bad, but he is an awful swag, and very cheeky—ever devoted son.

P.S.—I send you a little cross."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

“ . . . Miss Hills told us a splendid Red Indian story after which Mr. Helbert took us for a lovely walk. During the walk I saw a bluebell, which made me think rather sadly of you. And I thought of Daddy, and the hills and Bobbie, and my rifle, and my fishing-rod, and Micky, and Dash, and Riever, and old Dean. Please come here soon, from loving Bim.”

During the early months at school his master wrote :

“ Bim is the steady one of a large party of new boys ; he has been most kind and thoughtful to the others. The other day a small friend of his kicked a goal at football, whereupon Bim kissed him, promptly and unabashed. He is extraordinarily old in some ways, and backward in others. His English is exceptionally good.”

And again a little later he wrote of Bim :

“ He has been very plucky, and is getting on well. When I want a couplet to remind us of some small Latin rule I turn to him for the poetry. He was playing on his banjo in the middle of them all the other day, in a very lively manner. How well he plays for so small a boy.”

Here are a few more letters from Bim :—

WEST DOWNS, 1907.

“ . . . I hope you are quite well. This week at school has had more things in it. An Assyrian man came here in most lovely clothes, to give us a magic lantern lecture. He keeps a school in Assyria, and he told us he had seen



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

a man shot in a brawl with a revolver. His dress was very beautiful. I saw pictures of Jerusalem and Palestine.

I think I am 3rd in my class out of nine. I kick a goal very nearly every day. He also showed us pictures of his school in Assyria. With love from Bim.

P.S.—He was a real Assyrian.”

WEST DOWNS, 1908.

“ . . . I am so sorry you are ill, and keep thinking of you and the Baby. I do pray he may recover. Remember ‘Faint not, nor fear, His arms are near, Christ is thy friend, and thou art dear.’ I could not sleep last night for thinking about you, and I asked God that the Baby might get well. After I had been praying for a time, I heard a voice say, ‘I will.’ And after that I felt happier and went to sleep.”

WEST DOWNS, 1908.

“ . . . My aeroplane flew well but the elastic snapped. If it is not too much trouble please send me some more elastic. You get it from the Army and Navy Stores. I am longing for you to come down here. The term is like a thick dark line, with a star that shines in the middle, which is your week-end. Kisses, blessings, and hugs, from your loving son, Bim.

P.S.—Please tell Daddy I love his letters.”

W.D., 1908.

“ . . . I am longing for the holidays. And the Caravan expedition: and then in the Autumn the huge happiness of shooting in the Deans, and black game off the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

dyke . . . thank you so much for the lovely toys, I am longing for the blessed joy of seeing darling You, and darling Everybody Else. I love them all. And I do adore you, darling Mummie. March 6th is like the fourth Heaven, letters are the first Heaven, your coming down here is the third Heaven, and holidays are the seventh Heaven. But these seventh Heavens are so short."

WEST DOWN, 1908.

" . . . I lost my book of Hood's poems, but I have found it again. So, so glad. My favourite lines are :

'To go and see the Drury Lane Dane slain,  
Or hear Othello's jealous doubt spout out,  
Or Macbeth, raving at that shade made blade,  
While paralytic watchmen prow, howl, growl,  
About the streets, and take up Pall Mall Sal,  
Who hasting to her nightly jobs, robs fobs.  
Now Puss, when folk are in their beds, treads leads,  
And sleepers waking grumble, "drat that cat!"  
Who in the gutter catterwauls, squalls, mauls  
Some feline foe, and screams in shrill ill will.'

How good that is! I love Hood. Ever, with adoration,  
BIM."

The following letter shows the convenience of parenthesis, stretched surely to its utmost capacity?

WEST DOWNS, 1908.

" . . . Yesterday there was a first XI match. We won. Please bring David to the Concert, I do want him to be there. I have got Wilsford violets in my Bless Prayer Book. It makes me feel very happy when I look at them.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

I do love Wilsford so much. Dear Zelle sent me a letter card which when you open it a spring (made out of a bit of elastic, with a small card on it, tied on to a bent bit of wire, which you have to hold while you turn the card on the elastic; it is the same principle as that of the flying Butterfly) goes Brrrrr.

Now with oceans of love for all, especially you, Daddy, Clare, Kit, David, Stephen and Nannie (and please remember me to Mrs. Ford, and to Alice), and with showers of love for the blessed You.

Ever your loving  
BIM."

[*From Mr. Helbert.*]

*Dec. 7, 1908.*

"Bim came to my study to-day and asked to be allowed to challenge another boy X, as in Bim's opinion he had been insulting to you.

The gym. squad was drawn up, and the usual questions asked. X's only defence was that Bim had referred slightly on one occasion to his aunt. So the challenge was allowed, and they proceeded to box one another for three rounds. Bimbo gave him a bad licking; in fact there was only one boy in it; Bim pranced like a high-mettled war-horse round the unfortunate insulter; he occasionally brought his foot down with a resounding thud as he lunged. There was considerably more thunder than blood about the fight, though X was persuaded it was otherwise, and continually mopped his nose, with the back of his boxing glove expecting to find it bleeding. As a matter of fact his nose refused to bleed though Bim



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

did his best to make it. He succeeded, however, in making poor X very sorry for himself. I asked him when it was over whether he was sorry, and he apologised, which moved the Victor to say handsomely, in a loud voice from the other end of the gym. : ‘And I wish to apologise for having spoken as I did about your aunt.’ There has been no trouble since. Bim played well for the 2nd XI in a dense fog on Saturday.”

Here is Bim’s account of the affair :

*Dec., 1908.*

“ . . . Thank you so much for ‘Alan Quartermain.’ It is a lovely book. I have got lots of things to tell you. First of all a boy called X, called me names. So I said, cuttingly, ‘Billy from Auntie Cis,’ at this he got angry and said something that I thought insulting, about you. Now I am not going to stand my Mother being called names, so I asked Mr. Helbert if I might challenge X, and he said I might. So the next day we were told to go to the gym., so we went, and Mr. Helbert explained to every one the whole story, not saying what we’d said, but telling them I thought X had insulted my Mother, and then he told us to take our coats and waistcoats off and put on the gloves. I had a chap called Davies for my second, and he had Purdey. I let fly at X for all that I was worth and very soon he began to give in. I took advantage of this, and hit him as hard as I could ; I got him into a corner, and this was the end of the first round. By the end of the second round he was howling for mercy, and saying ‘Don’t hit me any more,’ and I think I



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

am right in saying that Master X will not insult you again.

The Advent Service came off very well. The sermon was preached by the Bishop of Dorking, who is shortly going to Japan as a missionary. He *is* a dear man. He was *so, so* kind to me. He said he is a cousin of Aunt Annie's. His words were: 'Then we are relations; so shake hands!'

P.S.—Please tell everyone about my fight.

'Come with your fighting gear,  
Broadswords, and targes!'

BIM."

WEST DOWNS, 1908.

"... Thank you so much for the cake. Just think, we are in the second half of the term now. Christmas getting closer and closer. The joy of putting up one's stocking, and being so near to the anniversary of the birth of the Redeemer of the world!

Some one said here to-day that they had seen something in a magazine about your being the loveliest lady in England. I felt jubilant indeed! Then some one told me they had heard it said that Daddy was one of the best shots in England, that made me feel happy too. Then somebody—I suppose in fun—asked me if you went in for the 'Throne' beauty prizes. That made me laugh. To think of the silly women who do go in for them, when if you appeared they would say 'here cometh one the latchet of whose shoe we are unworthy to unloose.' I am very proud of you, darling Mummie,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

I was top in essay. With love to a beautiful Mother from a loving son."

WEST DOWNS, 1908.

"... Do you think you could come down here soon? because this is the longest term and the never-changing routine is getting dreary.

Every day it is the same,  
Football's not my favourite game,  
Porridge breakfast, rice for dinner—  
Eat it or you're thought a sinner.  
Then there's this arithmetic!  
Don't mention it, or I'll be sick.  
If the next hour it is 'Cæsar'  
I'm like the leaning tower of Pisa  
Tottering madly to and fro  
On my best gymnastic toe.  
I long to jump, to dance, to hop  
Like bull within a china shop.

P.S.—Please don't believe my rhyme. I am really very happy. Only nothing else to write about."

WEST DOWNS, 1909.

"... Are you coming South soon? Daddy wrote me a very nice letter saying: 'and you may feel happy that I shall always take Mummie's arm at the crossings and be careful of her safety,' so now I don't mind so much leaving you. I've been top in three things altogether, and I mean to be top in as many more. I am not good at arithmetic."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

WEST DOWNS, 1910.

“ . . . The tent and soldiers and cannon are lovely, I do hope you all will have a happy Easter. On Good Friday it was Sunday till dinner-time. A lovely service at 12 when our Lord was put on the Cross, and another when He died. Then we changed into ordinary clothes, and taking string and baskets set out for Crab Wood where we were told what we mustn't do. Then we set out and picked primroses, then we joined forces with Tennant major, and with him got some lovely moss and more flowers. It seems so awful that it should have happened, and Christ's life on earth seems to have been such a failure ; except for the Great Crowning Victory at the end. It nearly makes me cry to think about it.

Were my presents a success among the family at large ? I would have sent you black and white mice in the egg, but they were out of stock, so I had to get chicks. I hope to be first in my class at the end of term, but second would please me very much. You can't think how I love Wilsford. Just think of the Dinghy Cut, Round House, village boys, b. Brown, and best of all the most lovely face in the world, which of course belongs to you. Then Daddy and my rifle, the Garden of Weeden, and everything there. . . .

I have learnt these lines :

‘ O Blackbird ! sing me something well !  
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground  
Where thou mayest warble, eat, and dwell.’



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

I think you will like them. They made me think of you. Please tell Daddy that I love his letters."

WEST DOWNS, *Feb.*, 1910.

"... The verbenas soap is lovely and reminds me of darling Wilsford. I was joint proprietor of the Sing-Song last night, with Pasteur; and recited 'Domestic Asides,' by Hood. I have just read a ballad you might like to hear. It is in 'The White Company.'

'What of the Bow?  
The bow was made in England,  
Of true wood, of yew wood,  
The wood of English bows.  
So men who are free  
Love the old yew tree  
And the land where the Yew Tree grows.

What of the cord?  
The cord was made in England,  
A rough cord, a tough cord,  
A cord that bowmen love;  
So we'll drain our Jacks  
To the English flax  
And the land where the hemp was wove.

What of the shaft?  
The shaft was cut in England,  
A long shaft, a strong shaft  
Barbed, and trim, and true,  
So we'll all drink together  
To the grey goose feather  
And the land where the grey goose flew.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

What of the men ?  
The men were bred in England,  
The bow men, the yeomen,  
The lads of dale and fell.  
Here's to you, and to you,  
To the hearts that are true—  
And the land where the true hearts dwell.'

Isn't that good ? I like it so much.

Your loving son,

BIM."

One year Bim's father took him back to school, and there remains a letter recording it. It is right that it should figure here, for it reveals how tender was the relationship that existed between them.

"... The darling and I had a very busy day yesterday. His hair was cut first, and then away to a book shop where two volumes of illustrated violence were purchased. Then I bought him a box of carpet bowls. After an early lunch we went to the Drury Lane Pantomime. He danced round the table at lunch, and said he was the happiest boy in England. He enjoyed everything intensely, only the sentimental songs were not so much to his taste perhaps, he likes action, and events to move rapidly. From the theatre, we had to go to the station, where the saloon stood, thronged with boys and parents. I saw his luggage safely into the van, settled him in the saloon next to young Goff, kissed him, and left him. He was not in the least depressed. After a bit I looked in again, and saw the darling sitting—for a wonder—quietly, evidently interested in the scene around him.



I forgot to say that while I was going over my letters with the secretary in the morning, Bim had pulled out my Scottish Archer uniform, and with the exception of the trousers, suddenly appeared completely arrayed in coat belt, sword, and cocked hat. Half an hour later I found him making passes at an imaginary enemy. . . .”

During these years at West Downs Bim still wrote poetry which appeared, now and again, in the school magazine, but this was not so fertile a period in verse as his earlier childhood, nor as his later days at Winchester. He read books of adventure insatiably ; Stevenson, Marryat, Mayne Reid, Kingston (he could not tolerate Henty), Barrie, Kingsley, Dickens, and many volumes of Red Indian lore, whose authorship escapes my memory. Poetry he was always reading, and as his letters reveal, constantly quoting ; and it was always the valiant that appealed to him, the adventurous and the strong. The first room that he had to himself as a very little boy was called by him “The Pirate’s Stronghold,” and one of the best contrasts that anyone could be faced with was on opening this door with its threatening label, to see the ribboned straw hat upon the little bed within, and socks and shoes beside the fender.

“*All is joy when you’re a boy, I wish I’d be one always*”—he wrote in a little book he gave his Mother, and he wrote a Pirate Play called “Ralph the Rover,” at eight years of age : dramatis personæ as follows :

Ralph the Rover, the Pirate King ; Billy Bones, a faithful seaman ; Old Sam, ditto ditto ; Fitz-Garta, a



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

treacherous Spaniard; and Black Dog, his accomplice. It will be seen from this that "Treasure Island" ran in his veins like wine, and created a world of fancy most substantially about him. He had a framed map of the Island, drawn by himself, upon the mantelpiece of the Pirate's Stronghold, and I feel it was only after some time at his private school when Law and Order had come to be respected, that he could write the ballad of the "Pirate and the Midshipman," with his sympathies against the Black Flag.

"Upon the 24th of June, in the middle of the day,  
The brig 'Formidable' espied a pirate far away.  
'Ho! brace the mizzen, square the top-sail, run up to that yard,  
For this fat pirate thinks that she will take us off our guard.'  
So spake the Middy Merrybone, 'and bring the ordnance up,  
For 'tis upon good round shot that this pirate she shall sup.'  
But when the pirate craft drew near, a voice from off her deck  
Cried: 'Show your colours, haul 'em down, or you shall be a wreck.'  
'What!' cried the Middy Merrybone, 'are you my brother John  
Who from our home did run away  
Upon one happy Summer day  
To leave us all alone?'  
'Yes. I was once your brother, but now I'm Green-Faced Jake,  
And if you don't haul down your flag, your life I'll quickly take.'  
'Come on, come on, O brother mine,  
And you shall quickly see  
That my good sword, The Silencer, shall swiftly silence thee.'  
Then Green-Faced Jake, he came on board, his sword was in his hand,  
And at his heel, like evil sprites, were thirty of his band.  
'En garde,' cried Middy Merrybone; 'en garde,' cried Green-Faced  
Jake.  
And then the two good swords did ring  
While Midshipman and Pirate King  
Had each his life at stake.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Then by a clever feint and twist the midshipman got in,  
The Pirate's sword from his hand did fly, and in the air did spin.  
'Thou'rt at my mercy, Pirate Jake,' the Middy then did cry,  
But in the Pirate's other hand a pistol did not spy.  
'Nay, nay, my little midshipman, although you are so brave  
You little reck  
That on this deck  
You're on the brink of grave.'  
He drew his pistol, cocked and aimed, but ere that he had fired  
A thrust from Middy Merrybone did all that was required.  
So died the Pirate, Green-Faced Jake, killed by his brother's hand,  
Who for a good ten previous years had harried Sea and Land."

That Bim knew the pages of Mallory and Spencer  
the following ballad will testify, written while at his  
preparatory school:—

### THE BALLAD OF SIR BEDIVERE AND THE PAGAN

It fell upon a Christmas tide,  
King Arthur sat at meat ;  
Without there blew a lusty blast  
With snow, and hail, and sleet.

"Now by St. Dunstan," quoth the King,  
Quaffing good Rhenish wine,  
"I verily doubt there is one cursed  
Pagan, south of Tyne."

And scarcely had he said these words,  
When a knock on the door rang out  
And a man-at-arms approached to say  
That a lady stood without.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

" 'Tis well," said Arthur, " let her in.  
This savours of a chance  
For one who is yet an untried knight  
To flesh his maiden lance."

The door was opened, in there came  
A maid of queenly grace,  
Who though but poorly habited  
Near shamed the Sun's fair face.

And she advanced full timidly  
And to the King she said :  
" I crave thy help in this my plight  
Who am but a poor maid.

" My father was a gallant knight,  
But he was foully slain,  
And my brothers were taken captive,  
And bound by many a chain."

Then waxed King Arthur very wroth.  
" Who did this craven deed ? "  
" It was mine Uncle Hildebrand  
Who owns no other creed

" Save that of the false Mahomet  
To whom he bows the knee  
And turns him towards Mecca  
For all the world to see."

" Now who of all ye goodly knights  
Will boldly sally out  
To slay this follower of Mahound  
In sword or tilting bout ? "

Then flashed two hundred knightly brands  
Of Weyland's tempered steel  
And the great hall shook with the shout,  
" Let me the Paynim kill."



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

“Go thou, Sir Bedivere,” quo’ the King,  
“And saddle thou thy steed,  
And do thou boldly in this quest ;  
I wish thee now God’s speed.”

Then forth rode bold Sir Bedivere,  
The damsel by his side,  
And through the pleasant land of Wales  
They speedily did ride.

Until they came to Castle Gore,  
Which stood in fair Glen Ord,  
And there he ’lighted at the gate  
And knockèd with his sword.

“Come forth, come forth, thou Paynim false,  
Come forth and fight with me  
And I will show thee that I am  
A better man than thee.”

Now when the Paynim heard these words  
His craven spirit quailed,  
And he prayed unto Mahomet  
That he might not be assailed.

“Come forth, thou caitiff,” once again  
Cried bold Sir Bedivere,  
“I see thy craven spirit fears  
The Sacred Sign I bear.”

Then drawing forth his cross-hilt blade  
He rushed into the hall  
And hewing off the Paynim’s head,  
Pinned him against the wall.

Then doffed he low his plumèd helm,  
And to the lady said :  
“Now welcome to thine own domain  
For Hildebrand is dead.”



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Then loosed they all the captives  
 Full fourteen score and four  
 Who in the dungeons many a day  
 Had languished very sore.

Then they returned to Camelot  
 A happy thankful band  
 And the brothers of Sir Bedivere  
 Did give their sister's hand.

And it was a merry morning  
 All the birds were glad and gay,  
 When the happy wedding party  
 To the palace made their way.

And the belfries in sweet Camelot  
 Rang out a merry peal  
 As in the Chapel's high Chancèl  
 The wedded pair did kneel.

While yet only a boy, Bim was a fine shot. He won a silver cup, when at West Downs, that bears the inscription—

yds.	yds.	yds.	
200	500	600	Total 75.
25	25	25	

So the following rhyme testifies more to Bim's sense of fun than to his prowess in the field:—

Summer's nigh over,  
 Autumn's coming yet,  
 And to the glorious Twelfth  
 We'll pay our debt,  
 With many a right and left  
 At old cock grouse,  
 To stock with toothsome fare  
 The larder house.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

But if the wily grouse  
Falls not to your gun,  
Then must you be content  
With humble Bun ;  
Who though despised  
By many sportsmen brave  
Can whisk his fud  
And fairly make 'em rave,  
As two by two  
Your cartridge-cases fly  
But few and far between  
The rabbits die.  
Bang ! ah, success has now  
Your spirits heightened,  
And yet the rabs don't look  
The least bit frightened.  
Your game bag can't be said  
To be quite heavy  
While conies sport them yonder  
In a bevy.  
What ! going home now ?  
Well you are a sinner,  
(But then, of course  
It's nearly time for dinner).  
Your friends ask : " And that cock grouse  
Did you nab it ? "  
Alas, all you display's  
One tough doe rabbit.



“He who, though thus endued as with a sense  
And faculty for storm and turbulence,  
Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans  
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes ;  
Sweet images ! which wheresoe’er he be,  
Are at his heart ; and such fidelity  
It is his darling passion to approve ;—  
More brave for this, that he hath much to love.”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



## CHAPTER V

*"Benigne he was to ech in general  
For which he gat him thank in every place."*

CHAUCER.



ONE of Bim's chief characteristics was his love of giving presents, and his talent for this. For it is a talent; to know what a person wants, to know when and how to get it, to give it lovingly, and well. Unless a character possesses this talent there is no moment more annihilating to ease than that in which a present is received and given. People stand, as a rule, in tongue-crippled silence, the one paralysed by an instinct to depreciate their gift, the other with a desire to thank sufficiently. But there are gifts that in their character, and the manner that accompanies the giving, make one love the giver, and all the world around him.)

"Do please," he would write from school, "get me a brooch, that I may give Miss Carbery. She does teach me so kindly, and is so nice." The last two words underlined emphatically. At Easter all his little gifts would be spread out on the floor of the White Parlour while he decided who should be given which. Silk ties for the maids, red cotton handkerchiefs for the stable boys, a sandalwood pen-box for his Mother, a



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

cherry-wood pipe for his Father and toys for the younger children; no one forgotten, and all arranged and done up in paper, with such evident enjoyment to himself; quick happy movements, and busy face. Before he had any pocket money, as a child of two and three, he used to give his own toys to his Mother, and this meant a great deal, for he always gave away the toy that he loved, and the most played with.

So many incidents revealing Bim's capacity for tenderness occur to his Mother as she writes these lines that it is difficult to choose among them. Once he told her he had intended cutting out of his Prayer Book at school, fearing ridicule, something that he had written of her there. With scissors on thumb, however, the act of excision became suddenly impossible to him, and so great a revulsion of feeling was brought about that the book was taken to a distant bank beyond the playing fields to be worthily and safely cherished again; and that night under the stress of compunction that still prevailed, the book was taken under the bedclothes in loving reparation, to share his rest.

She remembers one occasion when she had visited him at West Downs. They had spent some of the precious time sitting under a birch tree in Crab Wood, where they had read aloud and spoken of many home things. And when the time came for leaving that green spot, Bim put his arms round the bole of the tree, and kissed it. "It has sheltered us; I feel I must say Good-bye to it. . . . But perhaps I shall meet it again, some day in Canada, made into a canoe. . . ." He was cheerful.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He told his Mother he always kissed his bed at school, on the last day of the term. "I feel it has taken care of me every night." He had so much friendliness for all, and intimately did he love everything connected with his home. There are dried strands of hay now between the leaves of his Prayer Book, dating from these school days, they had been sent to him in a letter from the hay field; and years after this in the pocket-book he carried upon him when going into battle, was the photograph, among others, of a certain twisted little medlar tree that grows in the orchard at home.

"My God, what is a heart?  
Silver or gold, or precious stone;  
A star, a rainbow, or a part  
Of all these things, or all these things in one?"

Such was Bim in childhood, witty, vivacious, gay, poetic, devoted, high-spirited, and kind. Very much as he was in later years, you will say? Yes, because the child is father to the man. His thoughts ever busy with the cares and pleasures of those about him, his heart dwelling all the while in the Castle of Haut Esprit. That was his true home.

Those who loved him saw him pass from a perfect infancy to a happy childhood, which in its turn gave place to radiant youth. For one moment he stood upon the threshold of manhood, the morning light full upon his brow. . . . Then,

*"after the Great Companions, and to belong to them!"*



## CHAPTER VI



THESE notes on Bim's childhood would not be complete without mention of his village army. He always gathered his neighbours around him and called the village school-children in to share his games. He drilled them, providing them with toy guns and pistols, caps, bandoliers, wooden swords, and two banners. Bim's banner was invariably the Scottish lion, rampant, red on a yellow ground. The other camp might bear the Leopards, Bim was a true Scot.

“And when years have passed,  
And I'm wizen and old,  
My love for my Scotland,  
Like iron will hold.”

A friend of these childish years recalls this innocent warfare. “I remember him as a small boy at Wilsford looking to me as several years his senior for help in his various schemes and plans. It was his idea to keep a record of all the sporting guns and rifles and men, available for the defence of Wilsford and Lake.”

These village boys were the friends he used to entertain in the Round House, and towards their outfitting and their pleasure he gave all his pocket-money, and beyond.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Bim never required his time to be arranged for him. He always had his occupation and his plans, which he used to call his plots. "I've got a very nice plot for to-day," and once his Mother found a most important but small square of paper to which these plots had been confided, that none might be overlooked. As usual it was phonetic spelling, for this belonged still to nursery days. "Launcing on the lorn," "fritten spek with a gorst," and "drestopse." There were one or two others, each numbered in its place on the page, and these three that have been remembered, stood respectively for "Lancing on the lawn," which was to pull long spears of the half fallen pampas grass and aim with them at a given target, for an intention to frighten Sipek, his Mother's maid, by pretending to be a ghost, and the final curious word for dressing up, in costume, Topsy the nursery pug. And just so in later years, his days and hours were planned in the same methodical manner, and his time always happily filled.

He liked to cut stick and away, for some hours in the day; to walk alone three miles into the neighbouring town, to buy his own lunch there, with doubtless a pleasant sense of adventure and independence, making the day sweet. On these occasions, however, he would leave a note written for his Mother on the hall table, to spare her anxiety, "*Have gone to Amesbury. Shall probably lunch there. Don't expect me for some time.*" These expeditions were taken at eight, nine, and ten years old, and they were never checked or forbidden. For one thing his Mother sympathised with the pleasure



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

found in them, and recognised their value both as a mark of character, and a means of further forming it.

Sometimes he would go "away upon the Downs," and then he carried with him a pocket lunch, and a flask of water.

- When he was in his Scottish home, which he dearly loved, he made just such expeditions, but they were more in the nature of encampments. A small linen tent would be erected, made of a dust sheet and some garden bamboos, under the lee of a grey stone dyke, or at the edge of a sweet-scented fir plantation.

He would be dressed in his little knockabout tweed suit, and a fur-cap that he had himself sewn together from skins of hares of his own shooting, or a large felt hat, with a bird's eye blue silk scarf, knotted round the crown. This hat had been worn by his Father while abroad big game shooting, and Bim felt in wearing it, doubtless, some reflected share in its adventurous past.

In such spots as these, with the heather stretching away on all sides around him, he would spend happy hours, the grouse calling on the hill-side, and the sound of the running burns filling the summer air.

"Then tread the onward path, and hear,  
Out of the cloud, the curlew's cry,  
And from the hill descending clear  
The lambkin's bleat, the ewe's reply,  
Where Yarrow runs, a thread of blue  
Dyed from above, the moorland through."



## CHAPTER VII

*"Earth is the sepulchre of Spirit."*

L. W. FEARN.



OF these years at West Downs, Mr. Helbert writes :

"I have been cudgelling my brains in vain for a fitting description of Bim. He was a patchwork while here, of characteristic moods ; pleasantness and generosity and wicked little thrusts at convention. Always ready to twist a schoolmaster's tail, but withal as gently as might be. Full of light and shade, up one moment and down the next, hating to inflict or to suffer pain, loving the gentle and the beautiful in life, turning instinctively to sunshine and warmth, yet curious to explore the shadows. Quick-witted, abominating the classics of the classroom, tempestuous in games. The life and soul of his school-fellows wherever two or three of them were gathered together.

When we knew him best, he was all in the making, every now and then he would flash out into something supremely clever or comic. He loved high-spirited fun. Once, on my birthday (the Constitution was temporarily suspended on that day at West Downs), he dashed into my bedroom at six in the morning, wished me many



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

happy returns, and threw a sponge at me. Dignity had to chase impudence the whole length of the house before condign punishment was inflicted and his face thoroughly lathered with the brush which I had had in my hand at the moment of his entry.

On a certain April Bim turned up at breakfast in Hall with a foot tied up in one of my puttees borrowed for the occasion from the unsuspecting Matron. He was sympathised with, ridiculed for being fussy, anathematised by the games master for spoiling his afternoon lists. At twelve o'clock Bim was dancing a jig in the passage delighted at having made an April fool of the entire establishment.

He paid the usual price for an artistic temperament, suffering now and then from fits of the gloomiest pessimism. As a rule a touch of sympathy lifted the clouds at once, but sometimes the mood would last for days. The fatal thing was to ride him with a heavy hand; he was either too young or too old for it, and it invariably failed. His sense of humour was intensely developed and his crimes, though sometimes the outcome of sheer thoughtlessness, were more often mere mischief, deliberately devised to draw the unwary Don, and so provide himself and his friends with amusement.

His courage was of the highest order. He never betrayed a symptom of fear. He was intensely sensitive to pain, and loathed boxing, more especially boxing competitions, yet when the moment came he could set his teeth, wind himself up for the next round, and com-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

mending himself—I feel sure—to his favourite angel, rush in like a whirlwind, taking and giving some parlous knocks before coming back to his corner.

I believe he could have acted any part. He was given the rôle of ‘Scapin’ in Molière’s play, and identified himself with the character to an unusual degree, for a small boy. He was always ready ‘to pretend,’ and later on when he was at Winchester, he invited me to help him and his friends in the stage management of some plays they hoped to produce before the school.

Then the war broke out, which stopped all these activities.

Far the most characteristic trait in Bim’s character was his capacity for affection. He was ready, perhaps too ready, to be fond of anybody who was kind to him. He was quite frank at school about his great love for his Mother and for all of them at home. He adored them all, and made no bones about showing it.

I saw little of him at Winchester, and though no doubt he matured as we hoped during the last year of his earthly life, his heart remained till the end, the heart of a child.”

Of these fits of gloom that Mr. Helbert refers to, Bim’s family knew nothing. They must have been a form of acute home-sickness. His perfect good-nature was at home unimpaired.

While he was on active service Bim corresponded with Mr. Helbert.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

June 28, 1916.

" . . . I can remember nearly everything in your study. I am just thinking of them all—little tin dogs, little plaster dolls, the stork cigarette machine, the silver framed photograph of B. A. with dog. The nice old Italian woman, and (I think) Savonarola. The little photy of Mr. Kirby playing cards, a nest of metal Chinese boxes and the rows of oak photograph cases.

This time five years ago T. G. and I were learning Greek irregular verbs, and digging up plantain roots for you, on the bank outside M. I. . . . as George Graves says : '*Happy Days.*'"

[*To the same.*]

" . . . You won't find S. an easy chap in some ways. He's non-combatant by nature, and a conscientious objector to things essentially manly, such as jumping on other little boys' faces, and having his own jumped on. I cannot overcome a wish that he should go to you rather than elsewhere, and of course I'd take your word long before anyone else's, on the subject of schools. I am looking forward to seeing you soon (D.V.). And as ever, my best love and wishes to you, and that Palace of Urchins. Your affectionate

E. W. T."

Mr. Helbert was among those who received a letter written on the eve of the battle of the Somme.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

19th Sept., 1916.

" . . . I am just thinking of people I care for, and scrawling them little letters. I so often think of West Downs days, and how happy they were. Then on my birthday in 1911 you talked to me so splendidly on what I was going to do with my life. We never thought it would be this way!

'And whether we shall meet again, I know not; if we do meet again, why—we shall smile.'

Your affectionate

BIM."

So many of Bim's school-fellows who were with him at West Downs, like himself—

" . . . fresh of spirit and resolved  
To meet all perils very constantly,"

have passed on to the Other Side; and it is owing to the kindness of the Father of one of these, that I am able to give a letter written by Bim to him after the Battle of Jutland.

June 9th, 1916.

"I am unwilling to break in upon your sorrow, but I feel I must write and tell you how deep and heart-felt is my sympathy to you and Mrs. Cotton in the loss you have sustained. I remember your son so well at West Downs. So fine a nature, so kind a heart, and so unselfish a school-fellow, I have never known. You have given of your most precious in a high cause; and his



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

younger brothers have the example of a great gentleman to follow.

Believe me yours sincerely,

E. WYNDHAM TENNANT."

Here is another letter written by Bim, after a friend of his had fallen at Neuve Chapelle.

"I am deeply touched at being thus remembered by Roger. I had a great affection for him during the very few months I had the joy of calling him my friend. He was the free-est soul I ever met, and many times have I profited by his advice and friendship. I am somewhat younger than Roger, not quite eighteen, and you can judge the value to me of a friend such as he. It is a gap that time will find hard to fill.

'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
Enow of such as for their belly's sake  
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold.'

I would rather have lost any two of the new friends I have, if I might get Roger again. But now we must think of him as not even

'Sunk low, but mounted high  
Through the dear might of Him who walked the waves.'

He has a place to himself in my heart. I feel many thanks are due to you for giving me such a friend, even for so short a time.

Yours ever sincerely,

WYNDHAM TENNANT."

These letters have led me to anticipate. We must go back to the child leaving his first school in 1911 for Winchester.



LATER SCHOOL DAYS

1911-1914



“Close up my curtain, and shut out  
The sovereign eye of this o’ermastering Day !  
I cannot hear my master for the shout—  
The golden shout of all the fields at play.  
Here’s my hard master bids my heart to school  
Strictly reproves me all my honest yearning,  
Bounds my large hope to match his little rule—  
His little rule is all my master’s learning.  
Look where the fields are singing Summer’s dead,  
I’d fain be out to pluck ere she is gone,  
A little flower saved from her living bed,  
A single flower to rest my hopes upon—  
Close up my curtain, it is hard for youth,  
Conning his task, to be so plagued with truth.”

N. M.



## CHAPTER VIII



ABOUT three weeks after Bim's arrival at Winchester his housemaster, Mr. Blore, wrote as follows: "He strikes me as distinctly older than our ordinary new boys, both in manner and character. He is capital in combining so much energy with modesty and discretion, so that there is no risk of his being regarded as a 'spree new man,' however active he is."

While at Winchester Bim just missed the great distinction of winning the Gold Medal for English verse. He was second in the competition, "*proxime accessit*." All the competitors are in the VIth form as a rule, and so would have averaged a year and a half older than he. "You will have seen," wrote Mr. Blore his housemaster, "that the quality of Bim's poem in parts is far ahead of anything else, and among the boys behind him were several of the best, classical scholars in the top form."

Before Bim knew that the subject for the school poem was dictated, and only a given time allotted to the task, he had written home eager to commence, and asking for ideas as to a subject. The incident was suggested of Margaret Roper going by midnight in a storm of wind impelled by stern and filial purpose, accompanied



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

only by a little page, to rescue her honoured father's severed head from where it had been impaled on London Bridge.

Apparently the idea was acceptable, for in a few days' time arrived the opening stanzas, which however were cast aside on the authorities announcing that Pan was to be the subject for the poem.

### ON THE DEATH OF SIR THOMAS MORE

*"——Thou shouldst be living at this hour!  
England hath need of thee."*

The day was four hours old, and in the sky  
The moon smote wanly on the rippling Thames,  
The owl, night watchman, gave his mournful cry,  
Calling for wakeful brethren, by their names ;  
And each would answer from his belfry bower  
And cry " All's Well," behind the Western Tower.

The irony of that shrill cry " All's Well,"  
The requiem of England's finest soul,  
A brief, and heartless tolling of a bell,  
A few names writ on a death-dealing scroll,  
And Thomas More, great man of thought, is dead  
By order of the king, there hangs his head.

England, that mean Utopia, ill could spare  
A man embodying everything she lacked,  
Wit, courage, foresight ; and this man so rare  
When England was with smug self-seekers packed,  
Baptist-like frowned on Henry's faithless lust,  
And now his dust returns unto the dust.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

England,—so proud to call herself to-day  
Of poets and of poesie, the Mother,  
Was ruled by craft and selfishness ; and they  
The true and good report essayed to smother,  
Selling their souls for space in Mammon's train  
Sleek sly-fed minions of the great God Gain.

. . . . .

He never proceeded with this, he immediately  
turned his attention to the given theme.

Bim found great pleasure in writing the poem in competition and called it :

### PAN'S STEPPING STONES

A LOWLAND BALLAD

#### I

I clamber'd up the Bogle's\* Burn,  
A tassel-gentle on my wrist,  
And as I passed the hip-high fern  
Closed after, you could scarce discern  
My path ; below me lay Loch Dearne  
No bigger than my fist.

I sat me down and gazed below ;  
The air was heather-sweet to breathe,  
I saw three blackcock in a row  
On a corn-stook, the crofter's foe,  
And rabbits louped on limber toe  
Three hundred feet beneath.

The wind scarce rustled in the trees  
Whose serried phalanx stiffly stood  
Unmoved by every lissome breeze ;  
Thought I, each stalwart fir agrees  
“ Howe'er the zephyrs strive to please,  
I am in martial mood.”

\* Pronounced Bogle's Burn.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

My Tiercel beat her wings, and I  
Woke from a day dream of great space,  
And started, for a reedy sigh  
Sounded behind me, and the sky  
Suddenly darkened. With a cry  
I turned and saw his face,

A pilgrim russet-gowned, whose eyes  
Deep sunken in his face flashed out ;  
Wild tho' his hair his look was wise,  
As one who now at last espies  
His soul's salvation, but surprise  
Yet paves a way to doubt.

His scallop swung below his belt,  
Penner and inkhorn by his poke :  
His garments worn where he had knelt,  
His hat of tanless badger pelt  
Was in his hand : I vow I felt  
My heart leap as he spoke.

"Go not that way," quoth he (his tones  
Were like a pipe of sedgy reed).  
"Beware the he-goats stepping stones  
That lead men on, but bleach their bones,  
Take this to save ye from their groans,  
This auncient good remede.

For Pan enthralled me many years,  
And 'tis but now that I break free :  
I carved this stone wi' toil and fears ;  
Take it, by Pan, 'tis washed in tears,  
Mark well the runish sign it bears,  
I would it might save thee."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He put into my hand a stone,  
    (I would ha' conned it closer then  
But his wild eyes held fast my own)  
How long I stood has ne'er been known :  
When I aroused I was alone ;  
    I searched and searched again,—

Then paused . . . a raucous butcher shriek  
    Cleft the still air, a crimson bleeze,  
I started, seized my hawking pike,  
Heard her mate call and saw her strike . . .  
As a black he-goat leaped the dyke  
    And vanished in the trees.

I know not how long I stood still,  
    My throbbing head was fit to burst :  
My pulse beat quick, my mind athrill  
With aching visions, then my will  
Conquered, I lay beside the rill,  
    'Twas but a dream, at worst.

So thought I " 'Twas the cherry ale  
    That sent my sleepy thoughts adrift. . . ."  
I looked beside me and turned pale,  
Athwart a tuft of mountain kail  
I saw—and felt my spirit quail,  
    The wild-eyed pilgrim's gift.

### II

The God of cotter and of king,  
    Appointing each their trial ripe  
To prove their fair soul's bettering,  
Perchance may hear the tale I bring,  
I, who have heard the wood-nymphs sing  
    To Pan's bewitching pipe.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

For as I stretched my hand and found  
The pilgrim's stone was not a dream,  
But firm and solid as the ground  
Whereon I lay, an eldritch sound  
Was wafted down the glen, and drowned  
The little tinkling stream.

Its distant volume filled my ears  
And wove enchantment round my soul,  
Dispelling erstwhile lassie's fears  
As a June rainstorm swiftly clears,  
And in the radiant sky appears  
The moonstruck miser's goal.

I scrambled to my feet, my will  
Was not my own, the witching tones  
Of river-pipe enthralled me still,  
I started blindly up the hill  
Towards the woods, "For good or ill  
I'll risk yon dead men's bones!"

I skelter'd madly through the glen,  
Stumbled and fell, and from my wallet  
The pilgrim's pebble dropped; no pen  
Can tell the subtle change, for when  
I rose I was a man again—  
God's mercy, I should call it.

Wi' fearful heart I gained my feet  
And seized my little ebon cross,  
The music seemed no longer sweet,  
And then it ceased: a gentle bleat  
Aroused me; on a tree-trunk seat  
Sat Pan, green girt wi' moss.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

His hair was low upon his brow,  
His beard half hid a leering face :  
His mouth hung open, and I vow  
He still would grin I know not how,  
Were I to stand before him now,  
Last of the sylvan race.

His shanks were crooked as any goat,  
And towsie as a wether's fell,  
He boasted neither shoon nor coat  
His beard grew thick around his throat,  
I marked his ear and cloven foot,  
Sure lineage of hell.

" Good morrow, have I frightened ye ? "  
In mocking tones the Faun began,  
" It grieves me sore, young man, to see  
That ev'ry mortal starts to flee.  
This glade belongs by right to me,  
To me, great sylvan Pan.

For Greece no longer glorious lies  
Her queenly sway hath westward fled ;  
And I have slept 'neath topaz skies  
Since Attic sailors heard the cries  
From Syrnos' leafy isle arise,  
" Alas ! great Pan is dead."

I listened to him, all aghast,  
Quoth he, " if you will worship me  
Your harvest-time shall ne'er be past,  
Your crops shall 'scape the blighting blast,  
And your prosperity shall last  
What time you bow the knee.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

For now you are the guest of Pan,  
Last of the gods of wood and sward,  
Dance, drink, and sport : to stop were scorn,  
Dance widdershins till break of dawn,  
Drink deep before thy time be gone !  
Or mortals be abroad."

Gripping my cross, I spoke, " Suppose  
I were a man, and not some clod  
Who dare not strive with worldly woes,  
But learns strange things, and crazy goes  
Ensnared in warlock's toils, and grows  
To hate the Name of God.

What, then, Great Pan, were I a man  
For whom tho' born for grief, in pain,  
The precious blood of Jesus ran,  
And not one of thy hellish clan  
'Neath Christian curse and mortal ban,  
Would I hold this in vain ? "

I held aloft God's mercy sign ;  
No panic terror in my breast,  
But thanks that still my soul was mine,  
And silent prayer for help divine ;  
While shining birch and swaying pine  
Bowed in a mute attest.

And then it was as though a cloud  
Arose before me ; fearful roar  
Of syrinx shrill and cymbals loud,  
Patter of feet and shouting crowd  
Grew fainter, as my head I bowed  
And saw the light no more.



III

And so I lay till rose-leaf dawn  
Fell shimmering on the dewy grass ;  
All sign of yestereve was gone—  
(Save the tree-trunk where pagan Faun  
Had quaffed red wine from a ram's horn)  
As evening shadows pass.

I rose, and saw the tree-trunk there  
And felt it : 'twas as other trees,  
The top, of moss and lichen bare,  
Was crack'd and I became aware  
Of a small tuft of black goat's hair  
Ablowing in the breeze.

I crossed myself, strode down the hill  
Brushing away reluctant sleep :  
I washed my face and drank my fill,  
Then in the bracken by the rill,  
I found the only trace that still  
The dew-drenched ground did keep.

A black mark where the stone of Pan,  
Dropp'd from my poke, had struck the ground  
And bitten deep as only can  
What is of neither God nor man  
But creeps from hell 'neath ev'ry ban  
That Lucifer hath bound.

I shuddered as I stood and mused,  
" Had I not stumbled who shall say  
Where I might be ? " my mind refused  
So foul a thought, " my shoulder bruised  
And head, wi' elfin song bemused,  
Seemed a small price to pay—



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

—For a man's soul and that my own. . . .”

I walked towards our cottage door,  
And then I noticed a white stone  
At ev'ry yard, “Can they ha' grown  
By magic? I have never known  
That they were here before. . . .”

My Mother called from far away  
And ran to meet me, “Come along!  
And change your hose,” I heard her say,  
“Last night was warmer than to-day—  
That's well: now here's young Alan Gray,  
There's surely something wrong?”

He ran towards us, ghastly pale,  
Said I, “Good morrow to ye, Gray,  
Mother, bring out the cherry ale!  
Now come away, ye're no' so hale  
As last I saw ye, what's your tale?  
What hae ye seen the day?”

“As I went through the nether glen,”  
Said he, “I passed the cross of stone,  
Athwart the elder tree where Ben  
My old herd dog is laid, and when  
I'd put some blooms on my old frien',  
I heard a muffled moan.

Among the little burn-side flowers  
I found a wandering pilgrim, dead;  
He had been cold for many hours,  
But sure am I that hellish powers  
Dwell in him, for his dead face glowers  
And fills my soul wi' dread.



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

His hands clutch wildly at his throat,

He lies contorted, evil, cold,

His legs all hairy as a goat

Are strangely twisted, his long coat

Is wet wi' dew ; if you would know't

The devil's been too bold."

We searched the glen, his soul's last wrack

Had scorch'd the ground where he had lain.

Even the bracken round was black,

He was not there, by a haystack

We found one shoe ; so we turned back

And feared to search again.

Pan's stepping-stones may still be seen ;

I sometimes go to view the place. . . .

I am a shepherd grey and lean,

(Yonder's my house, by yon bit green),

And when I think on what has been,

I thank God for his grace.



## CHAPTER IX

*"I am gone before your face  
A moment's while, a little space;  
When ye come where I have stepped,  
Ye will wonder why ye wept."* A.



THE following letter shows how sustained was Bim's interest in the news of his school, and school friends.

27th August, 1916.

DEAR MR. BLORE,—

I was delighted to get your letter this morning, thank you so much for it, and the splendid amount of news it contained. I can assure you that old Wyks out here had a proper junket over Etonians after the result of the Eton match was known. The 1911 batch of men is getting very thinned out, isn't it, but with the exception of poor Hurst Brown we seem to be so far 'in the pink.' Our winning Chalker and Hopper pots is splendid, and our roll of men in different teams must compare favourably with any other houses. I see Erskine skippered a team of old Public Schoolboys (several men were in it) the other day, and won the match.

I wish I saw more old Chalkerites out here than I do, I met an extra old one called G. L. the other day, a barrister in civil life. He left the half before you took



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

the house over, I think. I met old Wyatt the other day.

I completed my first year in France on the 15th August, and my second year in the regiment at the same date. We came out of the salient the last day in July, and very glad I was to see the last of it. The constant minor, and sometimes major activity is very wearing. Now we are in a totally different and much nicer country, and have been on the move for three weeks. I share a tent with two others but it leaks, and with these torrents of rain life is rather like that of a frog in a marsh. However, we are a very happy lot, and find a great deal (mostly each other) to laugh at.

My poems are about to be published which causes me excitement and trepidation. I will invite your candour by sending you a copy, if I may, when they appear. I hope your brother is quite well—the West Downs brother—please remember me to him. Could you let me know Inchbald's address? I should like to write to him—just a postcard because I know you have many old Chalkerites to write to.

Yours ever,

WYNDHAM TENNANT.

“My chief recollection of Bim,” writes his house-master, “is of his going in to bat in our second team about number nine or ten, with a cheerful air himself, and of there being in the team a general expectation as of something exhilarating being about to happen; and of his hitting out at the ball with a fine



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

recklessness, and of the ball going high in the air in a way which might bring runs, or might get him caught out any moment. One match I remember distinctly being so won, against what foe I forget, when prospects looked black. Alfred Forster was in at the other end, and Bim made the majority of the runs. Despite his short sight he had a remarkable eye, and he had always a good courage.

At football (Association) one year, he played in the Senior Cup."

In the summer of 1914 when Bim was about to leave, Mr. Blore wrote: "I am sure that with his delightful ways, and his good foundations he should do well. It has been a great pleasure to me to find him always so straight, so simple-hearted, so generous, and so affectionate."

To make this part of Bim's history representative it must be said that he chafed under the salient characteristics of public-school life. They irked him, and his homesickness was acuter at this time than in private school-days. He felt the lack of any intellectual companionship, although the relation between him and his house master remained entirely friendly, and his kindness was deeply appreciated by Bim; but the inelasticity of the routine, and the monotony of a system that closes the avenues to any wholesome expression of natural emotion, led, in one of Bim's nature, to dissatisfaction and discouragement. Living in an atmosphere of group self-consciousness, in the gloaming light of one standard of judgment, he felt homeless, and not so much out of place, as wasting profitable time.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“How can you learn when you are so bored?” he would say, and “Nobody ever talks of anything interesting.” The literature classes and Shakespeare readings were wholly enjoyed by him, but Public Schools—with all their merits—hold out but little intellectual encouragement to a boy unless he be of an academic turn of mind, and this Bim most assuredly was not. He had sufficient tact to keep a constant guard over his exuberant individuality, but character is in-born and needs unfolding as much as direction, and I question whether the Public School system provides this.

You may place a young vine in the main route of the Great Northern Railway, and the direction will be most clearly shown of the ways in which the rails go, but will it find prop and nourishment at a time when its tendrils are most eagerly seeking these in nascent growth?

A bed of Procrustes makes ill lying for many.

During this period of his schooldays Bim was writing verse frequently. Several poems that he had never spoken of were found in his note-books, and among his papers. He possibly forgot about them in the sudden cleavage that was brought about by the outbreak of war, and the consequent and vivid change in his own life and surroundings.

He wrote in lighter vein than in his Lowland Ballad with great facility. One day some one suggested the phrase, “I’ll mention the matter to Mother,” as being a likely tag for a music-hall song, and gave the following verse in illustration.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“The first application for Julia’s hand  
Was a café-noir nigger from Africa’s strand  
Who pleaded with her—as they walked down the Strand,  
That he was a man, and a brother ;  
But his nose was as flat as the door-handle knob,  
And his face was as black as the newly blacked hob,  
So she told him she thought him too black for the job—  
But she’d mention the matter to Mother.”

Upon the instant Bim followed with this, in brilliant improvisation :

“The next application for Julia, in marriage,  
Was made by a Dutchman of corpulent carriage,  
Who came all the way from his home, via Harwich,  
To swear he was better than t’other.  
But his bulk and his waddle amused all the chaps,  
And he frequently poured out libations of Schnapps,  
She didn’t refuse him—but murmured, ‘ Perhaps ’—  
And ‘ she’d mention the matter to Mother.’ ”

Only one verse unfortunately, can be found of the song

### THE FAMILY MAN

I’m what’s known as the Family Man,  
My family numbers some dozens,  
In fact there’s the whole of the Spillikin clan,  
Including six aunts and nine cousins.  
I’m so open-hearted I cannot refuse  
To receive my remotest connection,  
There’s only one bath for all fifty to use,  
But our family sways the Election.

#### *(Chorus)*

O, I’m known as the Family Man,  
My family numbers some dozens,  
You see there’s the whole of the Spillikin clan,  
Including six aunts, and nine cousins.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

And here is a sonnet written on

### AN UMBRELLA

Thou trophy of a scramble at my club !  
Thou hast been mine for nigh on half a year—  
What say'st thou ? No, my conscience yet is clear  
Of parapluvial theft : yet there's the rub,  
My quondam broolly scarcely kept me dry,  
Boasted no princely shaft with silver shod,  
And as with puddly plash, I used to plod  
Homeward, the rain would drip into mine eye,  
Through a long rent that was but poorly mended  
By misnamed safety-pins, but I digress  
Its span of life should now be almost ended ;  
I wish its owner well, I can't do less,  
But my word ! when his homeward way he's wended  
He'll find his raiment in an awful mess.

Bim made many friends at school, as he did everywhere. He was especially happy when he could get as many as possible to come and share his holidays. To throw open his home with all its pleasures, to be the leading spirit in enjoying and contriving fun, this was his object and delight. Parties of friends would arrive, and cousins in relays, and there would follow lawn tennis in the covered court, impromptu acting, shooting, motor-cycling (Bim had not the temperament required to enjoy fishing), singing, fancy-dress dinners, charades of surpassing excellence, with games of Kick-a-peg all over the house, picnics on the hills, expeditions to St. Mary's Loch, and camping parties at Loch Eddy. How he enjoyed the Glen Sports, and organising sing-songs in



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

the granary. These happy activities sped the holidays all too swiftly away.

Bim had such a store of energy, so abundant a fount of life. He was one of those who suffer no drowsiness between waking and sleeping; he could always rise early and easily from his bed. Almost it was as though he grudged sleep. Could it have been that he obeyed some unconscious impulse, and like another Mycerinus packed double store of enjoyment into his days, to cozen Destiny?

"He was too radiant and joyous to be allowed to grow old and dim," writes one of these friends; "he gave everything lavishly, and it is impossible to think of him without his youth and glow, and that infinite susceptibility to life that turned everything into an adventure. His warmth, his gaiety, his courage, will never be tarnished by disillusion; and he died the death most in keeping with his life."

The following ballad written by Bim at Winchester was copied out by him from his own rough notes. It had no title.

To undertake in the ballad form the unnecessary difficulty of fully rhyming the quatrain, and sustaining this throughout a long poem, shows an excellent facility. And with this ease is revealed the quest of the beautiful, and the sense of chivalry that made the background of all his serious thoughts. The opening verse reminds one of "*Le jeune et beau Dunois.*"



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

"Come hail, come rain, come wintry wind,  
Come every scourge of Heaven and Hell,  
I pray I may my true Love find  
And that I may acquit me well."

. . . . .

"Comes he not in the next new moon,"  
Quo' she, "I'll to a convent fly.  
A cloistress I will be, eft soon  
An' my true love doth lightly me."

Her love he was a faithless wight,  
Nor loved her as she did him love.  
And he deserted her one night  
Leaving behind her saffron glove.

Another glove his helm adorned,  
Another dwelt within his mind,  
Pity and shame he boldly scorned,  
Nor thought on one he left behind.

One night he saw a fearsome sight,  
He stood in vasty halls alone,  
And round about, and left and right  
Were rows of statues carved in stone.

And on the ceiling, walls, and floor,  
Were mystic characters and signs,  
O'er archway, groined roof, and door,  
Nor might he read these runic lines.

Then of a sudden, flashed a light—  
A seraph flew within the room,  
Rend'ring the inky darkness bright,  
Ridding the hall of all its gloom.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

And in his hand he held a flask,  
On which was writ in letters gold,  
*"Beware false fancy's fickle mask  
And in their true shapes, these behold!"*

And set among the statues white,  
The knight perceived her he had wed,  
And snatching up the phial bright  
Two drops upon the figure shed.

In lieu of tall and stately dame,  
With haughty look and lofty eye,  
Behold a bearded warlock came  
Towards him, with coarse locks awry.

Aghast, he turned towards the next,  
'Twas she who he had mourning left,  
And on the wall he read the text—  
*"He loveth those that are bereft."*

Eager he takes the flask divine,  
He pours two drops, his heart must wait,  
Like one who reaches Fortune's shrine  
And tarrieth long to read his fate.

When suddenly a light most clear  
Beamed, and he saw she was arrayed  
In white, a halo hovered near,  
And he perceived she knelt and prayed.

Then cried the knight "What have I done?"  
He felt his brow, 'twas wet with fear.  
"'Tis dealings with the Evil One  
The mouth of Hell gapes hot and near."

And of a truth he saw a gang  
Of witches, warlocks, hags, and elves,  
Who round him danced and chanting sang  
To win him one among themselves.



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

Then he arose from off his bed,  
And drew his brand which by him lay  
Severing off the witch-wife's head  
Just as the cock pronounced the day.

And calling for his champing horse  
He buckled on his armour bright,  
Leaving behind the witch's corse,  
Just as the tree-tops kissed the light.

And followed by his faithful hound,  
Sorrowful through the land rode he,  
The snow lay thick upon the ground,  
The frost lay hard on every tree.

Time was he gained his lady's bower,  
He saw her not, his vitals burned,  
Till he espied her on the tower  
Awaiting, till her lord returned.

A moment more, and low he knelt  
Asking forgiveness for the past,  
(When most the Winter's winds are felt  
Will not the Spring return at last?)

She raised him in her arms; embraced,  
Forgave all that had been before.  
Then taking up his helm unlaced  
She placed it on his brow once more.

"Go forth," she said, "to dare and do,  
Serve others well, e'er thou gain me.  
Ever let Truth prevail, and so  
Thou'lt frustrate all vain imagery."

Nothing spake he, his sword held fast,  
The sunlight fell on wood and road,  
He thought on deeds of ancient past  
Once more into the World he strode.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Once more to fight, to win, to dare—  
To his Love's feet some gift to bring.  
A thrush sang in the outer air  
And looking up, behold! 'twas Spring.

There is no date to this ballad, but the hand-writing is that of his first or second year at Winchester, when he was fourteen or fifteen years old, and it is written in a school copy-book. The poems that follow here were written in the next two years.

There is the Song of the Paunchy Prelate. This excellent title is derived from Chaucer when in the Parson's Tale he contrasts the easeful life and self-indulgence of the high dignitaries of the Church, and that of the itinerant Wycliffite.

### THE SONG OF THE PAUNCHY PRELATE

Let some give praise to the far-off days  
When war and death were rife,  
Let others sing of everything  
That touches on work and strife,  
I sing no lilt for the good blood spilt  
Of knight, or knave unhung,  
For a good arm-chair well stuffed with hair  
Is the merriest theme e'er sung.

Why should I bawl for a mansion tall,  
Or yet for a stately spouse?  
She'd spend my pelf on her purse-proud self,  
Mine ire and gall to rouse!  
I hate a surfeit of all things  
But most of woman's tongue,  
For a good arm-chair well stuffed with hair  
Is the merriest theme e'er sung.



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

I often think as I sit and drink  
At the Abbot's burdened board,  
Of some poor lout in the world without  
By Heaven and Man abhorred.  
I say an *Ave* for his soul  
As I turn to my own good cheer,  
For all I wish is a well-filled dish,  
And a flagon of home-brewed beer.

And here is a poem in the vein of Augustus Moddle.  
It reveals how easily Bim could cast himself for any  
part, and do on the motley.

### RETROSPECT

The days are past when you and I together,  
Walked through the Blairy Wood at fall of dew,  
Or sat at noon in the deep dusty heather  
While the grouse crew.

We used to sit for hours by the rushes,  
Not talking much, at peace with all the Earth ;  
(A handkerchief my hand this moment crushes,  
I know its worth).

Poor little muslin square of scented treasure,  
Telling of lavender for fifteen years ;  
It helps to pass the aching hours of leisure  
That brim with tears.

I have not seen you now for fifteen summers,  
I play my part with neither skill nor ease,  
The last of the great troupe of human mummers  
Waiting release.

The curtain may ring down to-day, to-morrow,  
There'll be a friend, maybe, to clap or cheer,  
Life is a comedy, half joy half sorrow,  
Well worth the tear.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

To use one of Bim's own words, it is smile-worthy to remember that being sixteen when these verses were written, if auto-biographical, the hero of the lyric would be just one year old, crushing in his hand a lavender-scented token, relic of some long-lost love. The verse, moreover, in which the dejected one remarks

We used to sit for hours by the rushes,  
Not talking much . . .

to any one who knew Bim, is rich with its own smile.



## CHAPTER X

*"And here I am in Tidworth camp,  
By night I freeze, by day I tramp;  
We're crowded in a jolly squash,  
They never give you time to wash,  
The boys are dressed 'fore I'm awake,  
I need a dickens of a shake;  
But I don't mind the sweat and grind  
For England, England's sake."*

E.W.T. in a letter from camp, O.T.C.



ONE early spring, it was the March of 1913, Bim had a lucky cold. It followed a leave-out day from Winchester, and developed into tonsillitis. It was lucky because it occasioned his going to Clouds to recover, Wilsford being closed at the time and his family established in London. It was during this visit that he grew to know and appreciate his uncle George Wyndham, who now saw him a youth, no longer in childhood. The impression Bim made is, happily, recorded.

CLOUDS, *March 3rd*, 1913.

" . . . Your letter has just arrived, and I was on the point of writing to tell you how great was my pleasure on finding Bim the life and soul of the dinner party here on Tuesday evening. I had been to London to a



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

board meeting, returning by the late train, and on arriving went straight into the dining-room. There, sitting with Sibell, Percy, Diana and a hunting neighbour, was Bim, entertaining them all. It delighted me that he had motor-bicycled over sure of his welcome, as he may always be.

I insisted on his staying. He is full of initiative and resource, quite modest, absolutely spontaneous, and with all his 'finished' manner, a genuine boy. He bicycled back at cock-crow for his clothes, sharing Percy's meanwhile. He was out all day coursing hares with them all, and to-day he was apparently quite satisfied with a turn of shooting pigeons, though there were very few birds.

He went off to Salisbury (when the others had to go over to the Red House to lay out a garden) and paid a surprise visit to Olivia at her school.

We have had a happy evening. Aunt Connie joined our party to-day, and last night Guy and Minnie were here.

It is a great joy to me to welcome Bim. I love his friendliness that brought him over here, and which makes him so well able to join in whatever circle he finds himself. We have already discussed books; I am going to give him Fiske's 'Discovery of America,' which is excellent reading. He is a dear boy; very individual and unspoilt. . . ."

Bim brought away from that visit a measure of good fully equivalent to the loss of time at school.

In the June of that same year his uncle died. It was



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

at this time that these lines, found among Bim's school things, must have been written. They are called

### LE VOYAGEUR

The ship sets sail, the while a friend on shore  
Waves a fond signal to the emigrant,  
Who now departing shall return no more,  
To this, the tear-drenched land of shapes and things,  
Which he has left for one of—who may tell  
What he shall find when next he steps on shore?  
We only know that as he turns his eyes  
In pity on the fast receding coast  
He hardly sees it, for with eager ears  
He hearkens One who at his elbow stands.  
We hear not what He says, but for a time  
We still may scan the listener, and we know  
That he is drinking in with open soul  
The all-embracing truths about great things  
Which few this side the Ocean may divine.  
The ship ploughs on . . .  
And all the furrows of the estranging sea  
Are capped with Light. . . .  
Listen! a sailor at the focs'le stands,  
And sends his voice across the whitening wake—  
“*All's Well.* . . .”

During this visit to Clouds there must have arisen some allusion to political antecedents, for there remains this letter from which it may be gathered Bim had held but a confused knowledge on some points connected with his ancestry.

44, BELGRAVE SQUARE, 1913.

“ . . . I like your letter and question ; I recall the conversation perfectly. Briefly there are two statesmen just a century apart.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

(1) Sir William Wyndham—with a y—Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1714, your great, great, great, great Grandfather, the friend of Bolingbroke, and Ormonde, and Pope, who immortalised him as ‘the master of our passions, and his own.’

The death of Queen Anne, and the Hanoverian succession ousted him, and he led the Tory party in the wilderness, during the Robert Walpole Whig ascendancy.

(2) William Windham—with an i—of Felbrigge in Norfolk; Secretary of War against Napoleon, immortalised by Macaulay at the trial of Hastings, “Windham, his noble presence exalted by every form of manly exercise,” or words to that effect. His Army Policy was the best we ever had. He is of the same family, a cousin; the name two hundred years ago was spelt Wyndham or Windham, often by the same person in the same letter. It is derived from Wymondham in Norfolk; but—we won’t revive the spelling.

I am glad you wrote to me.

Your affectionate uncle,  
G. W.”

Among Bim’s papers belonging to this period is one bearing on it a singularly perfect lyric. It recalls in its rhythm a melody by Thomas Moore. Apparently Bim intended to write in sonnet form, for heading the page are two opening lines, embodying the same thought, and evidently discarded. It is as if characteristically Bim had been irked by the obligations of the sterner metre,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

and letting his spirit have its way, had forthwith broken into the pretty lines of the simpler melody that flows so easily.

“ I live on thoughts, men have not starved on such.

This is followed, a little lower on the page by :

“ My thoughts are ready helpers, and they stand  
Deep in my soul, marshalled to . . . ”

And then, as lucidly as a cool stream slipping through osier banks and green meadows, there follow the lines :

“ I wish I could tell what my soul sings within me,  
And cast into words the dear thoughts of my mind,  
But or ever a pencil I take to begin me  
An ode, the words scatter like clouds in the wind.

Perhaps it is better so, who shall deny it ?  
My thoughts would turn grey, and the charm would be gone,  
Like a sunrise on paper, the art would belie it,  
The songs of my heart would be cold as a stone.

I will live in my thoughts ; there are plenty of singers,  
Of words ever ready to leap to the tongue,  
As a zither may thrill to invisible fingers  
I will read the unwritten, and hear the unsung.”

And now let this chapter on Bim's days at Winchester conclude with the words written by a school-fellow of his, by his housemaster, and by one other who knew him then.

SOUTHGATE HOUSE, WINCHESTER, 1916.

“ I am just writing on behalf of the prefects and others who were in the house with Bim. He was always so cheerful and jolly, he kept everyone in good spirits ;



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

and he never had an unkind word for anybody. I shall always remember how good he was to me when I came here as a new man, and he had been here a year.

You have our deepest sympathy in your loss. And yet, though he has gone, no one could have had him die in a more splendid way. And none of us who knew him here will ever forget him."

MICHAEL HORNLEY.

SOUTHGATE HOUSE.

" . . . He was so simple, and straight, so kindly and unselfish—all the boys could see this, and loved him for it ; even schoolmasters too, though they are proverbially blind to much. . . . if he has not lived long enough to win fame like the uncle he so much admired, he has shown the same high spirit and endeavour. I shall always hold his name in honour as the youngest Wykehamist to take up arms for his country in the hour of need."

G. H. BLORE.

ST. WINEFRIDE'S, WINCHESTER.

" . . . I have often meant to write to you about your son. He had very considerable powers. They were such varied powers, and in some ways such original powers, that he was hard to judge. What I especially liked about him was not so much his gift of expression, though that was exceedingly good for anybody of his age, as his really living interest in any subject that one had in hand ; and especially his invariable courtesy in all my dealings with him.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

The classroom is a dull place for an eager boy, and one who has some intellectual power does not always think much about a teacher. But your son was always so delightful to teach, and if treated courteously he always returned it with heavy interest. He was very easy to guide, even to control, though he was just the boy in the division of whom one would least have expected this.

I remember his poem on 'Pan' well. It was a very good piece of work, an intractable metre handled with great skill. Some day you will publish other poems of his, I hope; but after all his letter to you is the greatest poem of any. Great as the tragedy is in the loss of such as he, there is something greater than the tragedy. I do not know by what name I ought to call it, but your boy is one of the blessed ones who saw this for himself, and can partly teach it, even to older people."

J. A. FORT.



## CHAPTER XI

*"Manners makyth man."*



IM'S manners were the only ones that count, the manners of the heart. The charm of his address and the perfect civility of his childish ways only deepened in later years. Heart, eyes, and tongue went together in a threefold strand. His tongue never uttered pleasant words that his eyes were strangers to. His eyes were ever in accord with what his warm heart was feeling, nor did his heart ever harbour a gentle impulse, without his tongue being swift to utter it. Yet with all this spontaneity he was entirely worthy of confidence and could be, when the convenience of others required it, as dumb as a stone.

When he first rode a motor-bicycle he had compunction as to how much this might trouble the world through which he sped. So he prepared a large cardboard placard, on which in three-inch letters he inscribed

### APOLOGIES FOR THE DUST.

With this unusual appendage fastened to the tail of his machine, he went sweeping through the Southern Counties in unparalleled speed. "He clung to the whistling mane of every wind."











## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

It will be seen that in Bim's poems written at Winchester two ideas persist that occur in his childish verse. The thought that evil leaves not only a smear, but a scar is in Pan's Stepping Stones, and it figures in his simple ditty of the "Wishing Well." The theme of his ballad "Come hail, come rain, come wintry wind," is identical with "The Lucky Dream," and this fact to anyone who knew Bim is striking, for to "beware false Fancy's fickle mask" was a warning peculiarly applicable to himself. He was singularly unable to pierce beneath the seeming. Outward appearances were never questioned by him, if they seemed beautiful; nor were recesses of character or springs of motive in others investigated. Having no guile in himself and being incapable of an unworthy motive he never suspected it in others. More than this, his love of harmony constantly determined his opinion when the outer seeming was deficient or at fault. He consistently perceived the jewel before he saw the toad, and this when to common sight the toad was the most noticeable.

It is the cynic perhaps in man that leads him to perceive the foul beneath the most fair outward seeming, it certainly is the divine in human nature that sees the fair within the foul. It is the Persian writer, Djani, who tells us that once as Jesus Christ and His disciples were taking their way along the seashore, they came upon the carcase of a dead dog putrefying in the sunshine; and one disciple said: "the horrid sight," and another cried: "the loathsome stench"; but Jesus, looking upon it, said, "the teeth are white as pearls."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Had Bim lived on here, he would no doubt have again and again been roughly disillusioned. The habitual trend of his mind was such as to court disaster of this kind. But would it have made a cynic of him? I believe not, for he had a store of magnanimity within him sufficient to meet all deficiencies; an inner loom on which he wove straw into gold.

In August, 1914, Bim found himself free from the bondage of school, and ready to give his service. He was quartered at Chelsea Barracks, and straightway commenced a round of congenial work and gaiety. He had a two-seated motor-car in which he drove his friends; I have seen a party of four or five people arrive at the door, two inside the car, the others clustering upon it as close as holly berries, and only once did he have any mishap approximating to an accident. This was when in the ill-lit streets of War-darkened London he one night came in contact with the Strand Griffin, with no further result to him and his friend than that both their hats were simultaneously pitched off their heads, and dropped side by side into the road before them. The car had to be laid up for a short time, to be mended.

Bim enjoyed the long route marches of these early Autumn months, and increased in excellence of health and chest-girth. He acquired in his regiment the name of the Boy-Wonder, and in zest and vitality he appeared daily to grow, never for a moment losing his old pleasant ways, simply enlarging them. To Bim everybody was his friend, everyone the quintessence of



kindness and culture, a paragon of charm and talent, the most delightful of companions. Till he happened to mention someone else, who appeared to be equally exceptional and gifted, to judge from Bim's eulogy ; and so these months sped by.

These were the days of the Singing Armies ; Armies that went singing through the streets, with crowds running beside them, and the air rang with cheers. The Parks were converted into London hayfields, where horses were picketed, and you saw fat men with bald heads drilling—all honour to them—in the London Squares. The air was tense in these days with excitement, and inspiring with the clash of bands that sounded martial music ; and in solemn contrast to the turmoil of the day the nights were filled with the quiet sound of feet, the measured beat of soldiers going by, company after company ; and Mothers lay awake and listened, feeling proud of their sons, and trying to realise what was before them.

All the colour and purpose of these early days of the War fraught with determination and high endeavour meant for Bim—Romance. He had been playing at it, and dreaming of it, and writing about it, all his childhood and youth ; and now it was his, and it brought him freedom, and self-expression, and joy.

To those who love him it will always be a happy thought that it was this that met him on the threshold of manhood, something as great as this. Not only illusive pleasure, and the empty tyranny of little things.

They will remember too that the first years of the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

War were his, the early morning, before the world was numb with pain and broken, before things were stale and tired as they became.

And so September and October wore on, and in November Bim visited Stanway and Maytham; there is a letter that records the Stanway visit among those further in this volume. Maytham provided him with especial pleasure because he was one of a shooting-party there.

The family spent that Christmas in London, as leave did not fall due at that time, and on the 28th December, 1914, they all went up to Glen together, and found it as ever supremely beautiful in its winter habit of frost and snow.

Bim had been taking singing lessons, and one of his great pleasures lay in singing songs. He enjoyed an advantage in the excellence of his verbal memory. He never had to peer over the music desk for the words, for he knew all his songs by heart. So often an amateur singer appears tethered to the piano, or moored to the sheet of music held within his hand. Bim just stood and sang, moving easily with the music, his eyes and countenance free to convey every shade of expression, and the gestures of his hands were peculiarly in accord. With it all, he had so great an air in himself of complete enjoyment, that it was exhilarating to watch and hear. It made it possible to understand an incident that occurred at one of the many concerts Bim organised later, at Marlow. He and another were singing the song in which the words occur :

“They’ll never believe me, they’ll never believe me  
When I tell them how wonderful you are. . . .”



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

The time arrived when it was the girl's turn to sing these words as she addresses her companion, and suddenly the men, the soldiers, who largely made the audience, knowing Bim's nickname of "The Boy Wonder," caught at the idea and applied it, all stamping and shouting the point home. And the clamour was not to be quelled till Bim had acknowledged the ovation, and then the song was allowed to proceed.

In the early part of the year 1915 Bim's younger brother became ill with diphtheria, and the days were fraught with untold anxiety, a time that would have been overwhelming had it not been for Bim's sympathy and his supporting love.

Then he himself became ill with jaundice, and his Mother plied between the sick-rooms while the two brothers shouted messages to each other, maintaining the family custom of conducting conversation at long range—and Bim gave tea-parties in his bed-room and wrote an amazing amount of poetry.

It was just at this time that another brother, then a midshipman in H.M.S. *Lord Nelson*, came from Portland Harbour on forty-eight hours' leave before going to the Dardanelles.

In May of that year Bim went to Marlow.

Whitsuntide was spent at Wilsford with a party of friends, the swimming bath figuring largely in the entertainments; and in July Bim had a fortnight's sick leave. While he was getting better his Mother read aloud to him "The Alien Sisters," by Mabel Dearmer, surely a notably good book, and too little known? Seeing him



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

there again surrounded by all the familiar features of his home, the tame rook, the doves, the family of ducks that he called The White Company, the younger children, and the dogs, set once more among all the serene flowing of the currents of homelife, it seemed to his Mother as if there must be some mistake—there could be no War . . . this must be the Summer Holidays, just beginning . . . and then one day in August Bim's Father received a telegram in which Bim said he had been especially selected to go with the outgoing battalion to France, "and his Father was to tell his Mother so, for he feared it would sadden her."

The following days were spent in preparation for his departure to the Front.



FRANCE



“ Leap from the crags, brave stream :  
The musing hills have kept thee long,  
But they have made thee strong,  
And fed thee with the fulness of their dream ;  
And given direction that thou might'st return  
To me who yearn  
At foot of this great steep—  
Leap ! Leap ! ”

So the stream leapt  
Into his mother's arms  
Who wept  
A space,  
Then calmed her dread alarms,  
And smiled to see him as he slept  
Wrapt in her soul's embrace.  
Knowing if from her sight he should be gone  
They twain were one,  
Nothing to mar or break, in the beyond  
That indissoluble bond,  
And with the brooding of her encompassing breast  
Cherished his mountain chillness—  
O, then,—what rest !  
O, everywhere what stillness !

T. E. BROWN (*altered*).




## CHAPTER XII

*"Fair stood the wind for France  
When we our sails advance  
Nor now to prove our chance  
Longer will tarry,  
But putting to the main  
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,  
With all his martial train  
Landed King Harry."*

DRAYTON.

10.55 p.m. Sunday,

15th August, 1915.

"UST a line to say how much I loved seeing you all yesterday, and am proud of you all for being so brave. We are very happy and cheerful and had a good send off from Marlow. I sang repeatedly at a concert last night, and went on about 11 to say good-bye to Violet and Nancy and Elizabeth at Thame. They were all very sweet to me. I'll write again from Havre or St. Omer. God bless you all, and me too.

Ever your devoted Son,

P.S.—*'We few, we happy few.'*"

BIMBO.

9.30 a.m., Tuesday,

17th August.

"... We have been here since midday, yesterday, and we march off to the trains for St. Omer at 12 and



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

2 to-day. I am going to draw rations at 10.50 and go off before the rest. I had a lovely bathe in the sea yesterday, but the water got into my identification disc and dissolved the bit of talc and rather spoiled my photy of you ; so please send me another little photy some time soon. This is quite a nice town, we are about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from it, but got down yesterday on trams. The interest displayed in us is very amusing.

I believe we are in for a 31 hours' train journey to Saint Omer, with only two halts. Our average pace in the trains will be, I am told, 15 m.p.h., which is horribly slow.

I'll write to you again directly we get to our destination, or, possibly, during a halt.

I am very well and very happy. Bless you, darling Moth'."

*Wednesday night,*

*18th August, 1915.*

" . . . We arrived at the Base this morning at 10.45, and marched about four miles to our billets. Mine is quite comfortable, though I have only my sleeping-bag to sleep in. Being second in command of my company, I am with the Captain, who has the only bed. We are in a little villa with a long pretentious double drive, with an atrocious little doll's house at the end. It belongs to a M. Wollbeerboom, or some such name. I hope he's not a boche: perhaps Dutch. I was very well all the time on the ship, and Archie Morrison let me share his cabin with him, which was very kind. There I was able to undress and wash next morning.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

We got to the rest camp two miles from Havre for lunch, and left it at 10 next day. Havre is a delightful town, and I had a splendid bathe in the sea. We didn't leave the station till 4 yesterday, and only got here at 10.45 to-day. The journey was long, tiresome and dirty, but we were all extremely cheerful and in merry company. Assisted by the soldiers' twin saints, Fortnum & Mason, discomfort is grinned upon. I have just had a good dinner here, and am off to bed soon. It is about 8.45 on Wednesday. Please send me some cigarettes for my men. My fondest love to you all."

*Sunday, 22nd August, 1915.*

"DARLING MOTH',—This morning I heard big guns for the first time. I crossed myself.

I am extremely happy here, and rode to-day with Flick (Fletcher) two miles out to lunch with the 1st Battalion, which was very enjoyable. I am very lucky to be in his Company, he is the nicest Captain I have ever had over me, and if one or two people go sick (as they may being not thoroughly recovered from their wounds) he will be second in command, and I shall command the Company, which would be great for me, wouldn't it?

I wouldn't be anywhere else but here, for the world, darling Moth', I am on the high-road of my life! and any deviation therefrom would break my heart.

Thank you so much for the photy of you. I love it."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

31st August, 1915.

“ . . . There was no necessity to send that prayer, I say it every morning, and read my Bible as well as praying every evening. My Captain is very devout and we always pray at the same time, on our knees. My health is splendid, and I will take every care of it. There is no likelihood of our fighting yet, and there is nothing concerning me you need worry about at all.

I myself am only anxious about Christopher ; I trust and pray he is all right. I am still very happy here. I and Fletcher and Macmillan have very good book discussions, which make things very pleasant. There was a huge Grenadier dinner the other night at which all four Battalions were present, 91 Grenadier Officers in all. I saw many old friends, and was very happy. It poured all to-day. I took a party of Presbyterians and Methodists to Church to-day. A very nice little service ; about 35 people and an American organ, and a nice Cornish padre. The C.O.E. Service, to which the rest of the Battalion went, was an awful frost, as the man preached a very tactless sermon, insulting the men with warnings to behave, and choosing hymns none knew the words or tunes of. I was very glad I went with the dissenters. Everything you have sent has come here safely, thank you, and even two oilskin sheets have appeared. The Fortnum parcel was splendid.

\* \* \* \* \*

Please put our special message in your next letter, as it is our hall-mark of love, isn't it? And nothing will



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

ever make me love any other woman more than I love you, I swear it. At any rate till after I am married. Write back and tell me that you love me as much as you ever did, as I know you do, only it is good to see it.

Don't ever worry about me.

I'll write again soon."

*6th September, 1915.*

" . . . Yesterday being Sunday, I played tennis with three 'little thrends\* in pink,'—the brewer's daughter Thérèse Bellanger, Nellie and yet another Germaine, whose name I know not. We had great fun, and four very good sets. The father watched from near by, like a comatose Boer general, in a panama and a huge black beard. We then went back to a terrific tea at which we all drank toasts in champagne provided by the Brewer, of which I drank a very little, so as not to appear stand-offish.

After that all the officers in the battalion played rounders, which was great fun. The Prince of Wales came along and watched for a few minutes.

P.S.—Your precious letter made me very happy indeed."

*September 7, 1915.*

" . . . Last night I rode over and had dinner with George Villiers at Wizernes, where the 1st Battalion are. Harold Macmillan came with me, he rides much better than I do. It is about three miles away and it was in the dark both ways, we couldn't get horses at first, so were rather late, as we had to get transport horses. We expected to find snorting Generals and Majors

\* One of Bim's mispronunciations in childhood.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

cursing us for being late and were consequently delighted to find only George Villiers, all the rest of his Company being on leave in England! We had a delightful evening *à trois* and had one good laugh after another, being all blessed with the same sense of humour, and unhampered by any shadow of militarism. I suppose we shall start fighting soon."

*Tuesday night,*

*September, 1915.*

"... I sit down to write these few lines at a place about 9 miles from our old billets. We have come here for two days to help the French with their lines of defence round Calais. I came in the mess-cart as I was appointed billeting officer.

It took us ages to get here with a very slow horse and a medieval and quite unsprung cart, and then we had to find place for over 350 men and 5 officers in this absurd little village. The men are housed like cows, most of them, but they have plenty of straw and enough to eat. All our billets are very uncomfortable and I have been on my legs from 3.15 to 7.30 this evening seeing about the men before they arrived and showing them their ox-stalls when they came in very tired after marching over three hours.

There are rumours of an Allied attack involving over a million men at the beginning of next week; if it fails we shall be put in the gap, and if it succeeds we shall chase the Boches to the Rhine.

I am dead tired so will stop now."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

15th September, 1915.

[*To his younger Brother.*]

“ . . . I am so glad to hear that you are getting strong and having a good time at dear Glen, which I am longing to see again. I am so glad the Seabrook car is going well ; it is a ripping little car, and I once got 52 miles an hour out of it in Richmond park, only I should not try that if I were you yet awhile. To-day we did trench-digging, and practised making barbed wire entanglements, on the top of a hill near here. We also practised throwing bombs up trenches, and our bombing officer, who is called Cocky Hoare, gave a lecture on the different sorts of bombs.

This one has streamers to make it pitch nose foremost, and this one goes into the muzzle of a rifle and is shot out with a blank cartridge. It is great fun practising throwing bombs with stones, because it is hard to throw it across the traverses into the next bit of trench.

First you throw ■ bomb from where you are (at A) just over the traverse (shaded) into the next trench B, and then another over the next traverse (shaded) into the far trench C, and then two men with rifles and bayonets fixed go ahead to see that all the Germans are dead up to a certain point (where your second bomb pitched) and they cry ‘all clear,’ and you run up and do the same again, and so on all up the trench. The wire is made like an expanding cylinder that you pull out from a coil and nail down ; then you put an ordinary fence of stakes and barbed wire just in front, and have long bits nailed across in front to catch in peoples’ legs



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

in the dark. It is rather fun making these entanglements and imagining the Germans coming along in the dark and falling over these things and starting to shout ; whereupon you immediately send up a flare (which lasts ten seconds) and turn a machine gun on to them as they struggle in the wire. It sounds cruel, but it is War. Now I must stop, and go to sleep as to-morrow is Thursday and we have a Battalion Field Day.

God bless you, darling Dave, I am longing to see you.

Your ever loving brother,

BIMBO."

16th September, 1915.

[*To a Friend.*]

" . . . I was awfully pleased to get your letter the other day when we were digging trenches about nine miles away from our billets. We did two days' work, marching each way and digging eight hours a day. The billets were bad, mostly barns and straw-lofts, crawling with hen-lice. I had a mattress on the floor of a farmhouse and rashly trusted the sheets the good lady very kindly gave me. The next morning I was a mass of flea-bites, which have been rather a nuisance, but are now all right again, though I could say with St. Peter, 'all day have I toiled and caught nothing.'

We were called together and introduced to General—— yesterday, who commands the \* \* \* \*  
He was very cheerful and seemed a very typical general. He called the Germans a half-beaten Army (faint cheers from me !) and said once this big biff gets



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

them on the run it will be our job to keep them on it, which sounds all right, if a correct prophecy. We expect to start off some time next week, and probably to Béthune. I am glad, because I am tired of staying at this little town where I have been over four weeks, and have only heard very distant gunning. It has been a very happy month, and I have never been fitter in my life. For I have been asleep before eleven (and often earlier) every night, almost, and as I don't get up before seven I get eight hours every night. The weather has been glorious except for four days' rain.

Sir John French lives a few hundred yards from my very comfortable billet, but I fear I shan't be here when you and Uncle Henry come over to see him, as I suppose you do periodically. I am thirsting for a civilian opinion about the state of affairs, as all we are told here is not of the most optimistic, and every one seems to think that the Meuse and Scheldt are fearfully strongly fortified.

I had a splendid letter from Kit the other day.

Osbert Sitwell is with our 2nd Battalion sixteen miles away. I wish he were with us. I have just been out learning to ride, at which I am not an adept. You spoke very kindly about holding your manhood cheap when I come home, but I assure you I held mine (literally) very cheap indeed as I bumped up and down on Major Myles Ponsonby's charger. I fell off once and was rather shaken up, but not much, and lost confidence no whit on remounting. Now I must stop. I fear my letter is rather dull, but I am living the life of a cabbage, and have little news. I'll write a better screed when I have



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

a few grim notches on the butt of my revolver, and a captured Junker or two in tow !

I hope that if you have the time you may be able to let me know that you consider things are going well. For your opinion is valued above every one else's, and I'm sure my brother officers would like to have it from you ; I don't suppose you'll have time to, but if you do it will give very great pleasure to your friend

BIMBO TENNANT."

*Sunday, about 4.15,*

*19th September, 1915.*

*[To his Mother.]*

" . . . I was delighted to get the letter about dear Uncle George this morning.

You will be interested to know that a great friend of mine in this Battalion, Harold Macmillan, was saved by Uncle George when his horse ran away in the park thirteen years ago ! I don't think this is the occasion that is mentioned in the Scout book. Macmillan is a great admirer of Uncle George, and is a very clever fellow, having been president of the 'Union' at Oxford. I saw Ivo at the inspection of the 3rd Guards Brigade by Lord Cavan on Friday, though only in the distance ; he is with our 1st Battalion, and I think I'll try and go over to tea with him to-day.

I realize how good it is to have a Mother like you so strongly, when your splendidly regular letters come and my butterfly friends' letters get scarcer and scarcer ! though that is not possible, it makes me



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

love you more than ever, for you never stop thinking of Kit and me all day long. I have been away just five weeks to-day, but it feels a long time. We are waiting for this colossal attack which is going to take place any day next week very probably, and for which the French have made preparations on quite a different scale to any ever made before. They have got a big gun to every 15 yards of the front, on which they are going to attack, and I don't know how big a front it is, but I imagine over 15 miles. My Battalion is in the 3rd Guards Brigade, in the Guards Division in the 11th Army Corps, in the first Army: these are commanded respectively by Brigadier General Hayworth, General Lord Cavan, General Haking, and Haig at the head of the list. They are all very fine generals and I could wish for no one else. When this great advance starts, it is pretty certain to succeed at first, and we shall be popped into the hole they make and shall try to carry the success on across the Rhine. It sounds a big job and I expect it will prove so, but I think it will succeed. Of course, if the first steps of the advance fail, we are not made use of at all, and it all fizzles out, which would be very flat. I hope you continue to have good news from Christopher?

My fondest love to all of you, and may I soon be back with you."

*24th Friday, September.*

"... We arrived here at 9 last night after a 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  hours' march. It rained the whole time, but we got comfortable billets on arriving here, and had breakfast



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

at 9 this morning. We have just heard of the Budget, which seems to me to spread the taxation out very justly. I thought we should stay here a few days, but it seems that we march again to-night, though I know not how far. We only came 8 miles last night, the sky was continually lit up by the big guns in the distance and the men, who thought, I believe, they were going into action last night, were somewhat subdued: but brightened on being shown into barns knee-deep in straw and having hot tea served out within a few minutes of arriving. I am sitting now in the room I shared last night with Bernard Layton, who I am very fond of. We each had a bed. The others are here too all writing for the post which goes in a few moments. I hear just now that we are likely to sleep in a field to-night. So it's hey! for the Asprey bag.

I am in high-explosive good spirits and there is not much I fail to raise a laugh about! 'The great 'biff' seems to have gone forward quicker than expected, as we are being shoved forward thus. Now I must stop, I'll try and write every day, but my letters may only reach you two or three at a time after rather a gap. I hope you've had good news of Christopher. I have the feeling of Immortality very strongly. I think of Death with a light heart and as a friend whom there is no need to fear."

*Saturday night,  
25th September, 1915.*

"... I must just write you a short letter as I haven't much time. We march away from this peaceful little



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

village at 10 to 8 and it's now 5.30. We were told of this move this morning and I imagine it means business.

I'll try and send you a line every other day at least, now that we are probably in for a biff, we know not how great.

God bless us every one.

P.S.—I am in the very best of health and spirits.”

*Sunday morning,  
26th September.*

“ . . . I'm so sorry I couldn't send off a letter to you yesterday. It was rather a trying day, for we were on the road by 8 a.m., and after going  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles we sat down while I (who was billeting officer) was kept on my legs going round chalking up how many men each house or barn would hold. But at 12.30, just as I had finished this rather arduous job, an order came that the Battalion would march off again at 1.20. I managed to eat some lunch in about 3 minutes and off we went again, and kept on the road the whole day, continually being held up by Cavalry Brigades who had to get ahead. Though we didn't go more than 16 miles yesterday we did not get to bed till 1.30 a.m., when I lay me down on a rug on some straw in an Estaminet and slept till about 4.30, in clothes and boots of course. Breakfast was about 5.30, and it is now 6.35 and we are awaiting orders. The great attack begun well yesterday except for the Givenchy trenches which



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

the Boches re-took owing to our bombs being damp. I am very happy indeed and in the highest possible spirits. I got your letter when we were on the march, or rather when we were waiting for a Cavalry corps to go past us, while we stood or sat on the side of the road from 3.30 to 9.30. It rained almost the whole time till 10.30, I should think. But to-day, though cold, bids fair to be fine.

You should have heard the men cheer yesterday morning when the news came that the frontal attack was succeeding. It was splendid. I saw Alwyn Pelly among the Cavalry who passed us yesterday, we waved to each other. The commanding officer (now Colonel Hamilton) is in good spirits and his cheerful greeting of 'Morning, young feller' always bucks me up like anything, though I have not known a moment's despondency, thank God. I am now in the room I slept in at Helicourt a few miles from Béthune."

*Tuesday, 28th, 2 p.m.*

"... The Battalion took Hill 70 last night, but as all 2nds in command of companies were left behind (in case of heavy casualties) I did not go into action, but remained about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Hill 70, among our big guns which kept up a continual bombardment. I ought to be very thankful I did not go into action as out of 18 officers 11 are now *hors de combat*, though I believe only one or at most 2 to be dead. The Commanding Officer (Hamilton) is recovering from a gas shell, Myles Ponsonby (Major), and George Houston-Boswall are



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

both badly wounded. Two more are slightly gassed. Alan Tompson is dead—he was a charming fellow. My captain, Flick, has a bullet through the arm, and is for England all right. This leaves me in the responsible position of Company Commander. I pray God I may fill it with honour during the future engagements.

I slept in my cellar last night with Charles Britten and Douglas Pemberton; we were more than usually uncomfortable, and very cold, but otherwise all right. I saw my first glimpse of the horror of war yesterday, when walking along one of the cobbled streets full of orderlies, cyclists, and military police, some 500 yards behind my cellar. I happened to come along a few minutes after a shell had burst right in the centre of the road, killing six men and two horses. It was terrible. One dead man was a bright greeny-yellow as the result of the lyddite fumes, but the rest were killed equally instantly by pieces of shell. The medical officer who arrived as I came along borrowed my pistol and finished off one of the wounded horses with it. I thought it seemed a shame as the horse had only one or two small cuts and could easily have been seen to. But I suppose they must care for the men first. I hope you won't be revolted by these details, but they struck me so forcibly, having never seen such awful results of battle, murder, and sudden death.

I watched the Boche shells bursting within quite a few yards of our gun emplacements about a mile in front of my house, but not one ever struck one, and a great many



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

were 'dud' shells, that is, didn't go off when they landed, being badly made. Our guns are keeping up a steady fire, and I am writing this as I lunch in a room with only half a ceiling, and stacked with rolls of barbed wire.


P.S.—I am now at Vermelles."



## CHAPTER XIII

*Sunday,*

*10th October, 1915.*

“ WRITE to you from the dug-out which Osbert and I share in the support trench immediately behind our front line. He is with half our company in the front line, which I was most of last night and this morning. It is rather exciting being in the front line, and I always wear my steel cap, night and day. We are between 150 and 200 yards from the Boche trenches, and the ground between our wire entanglements and theirs presents an appearance such as one hopes only to read of. In one place especially where our men charged in the teeth of a machine-gun a week ago, it is an absolute shambles, and, of course, is out of the question, as it is absolutely exposed. We came in last night, and had not been in long before a Scots Guards Officer told us there were two wounded men between the lines. We made him mark the place, and after dark we sent out the stretcher-bearers, who I rejoice to say found the men, who had been lying in a shell-hole, foodless, for six days and five nights! They had been afraid to crawl up to this trench, because they weren't sure it wasn't occupied by Boches, and they quite wisely preferred to



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

risk dying of exposure to giving themselves up to them by mistake. They were terribly weak, and the sergeant told me it was like carrying a child to lift them, so light were they. But a small amount of food and tea, and a little rum strengthened them greatly, and we examined their wounds. Both of their wounds had dried long ago ; one had a dark-red hole the size of a shilling in the centre of his back which came out on the left side, lower down ; the other was wounded all down one leg. Both are certain to recover, they tell me, for which I am very thankful ; it was heartrending to see them when they carried them in, they looked just like very tired children. This morning our guns got the range of the German trench in front to a yard.

This is where I had to stop and rush away on Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Please continue with my other letter.

God bless us all."

*11th October, 1915.*

" . . . Thank you so much for your letter received last night. I wrote you part of a long letter yesterday after lunch, but had to dash off at a moment's notice and leave it lying loose in this dug-out, whence it has, of course, disappeared in the night. On Saturday night we came into these two lines of trenches, which we are occupying part of, thus : Nos. 1 and 2 Companies, and part of ours, in the support-trench, and No. 3 Company and the other half of us in the fire-trench. We have the Irish Guards on one side, and the Scots on the other.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Yesterday was a restless day as we had a lot of work to do hollowing out places for gas-cylinders to be put into. Wooden supports are put in to prevent the parapet falling in on top, and it is supervised by an Engineer Officer. A great many muddles arose yesterday owing to our not having been told whether to count a small hollow as a whole one or part of one, when we got the order to number them down, so we were one number wrong, and were kept on our legs quite unavoidably but to a very annoying tune of some two hours more than was necessary. This is not very clear and it would take reams to explain all the bother which was finally settled by about two seconds telephoning to Divisional Headquarters.

It was a quiet day along our front yesterday, but we heard the French having a terrific battle on our right. A good deal of sniping went on during the day, and I think we got two along our bit; that is our front half Company. Our guns shelled the Boche trenches exactly in front of us with marvellous accuracy, and we saw on two occasions bodies being thrown out of the trench where a shell had burst a moment before. I fired three shots through two sand-bags on their parapet between which a sniper was making merry, and I may have got him, as he didn't shoot from there any more. But I hadn't time to settle down to watch a bit of trench like private soldiers have, as I was flaring about a good bit. We got into the trench about dark on Saturday night, and I got three hours' sleep that night, from 1 to 2.30, and from 6 to 7.30. I was relieved at 1 p.m., yesterday, and



lunched and rested, but didn't sleep from then till 4. From 4 till about 9 or 10 we waxed hectic (ably assisted by the Royal Engineer Officer) over the cylinder recesses. Then we both (Osbert and self) came back, and had some dinner—a delicious fresh cherry-tart, brought by the Mess-Corporal from Béthune, among other things. Soon after 11 I went back to the front line and slept in my close-fitting body-hole with my head on a sand-bag till nearly 1, when I got up and instructed a patrol or two, who went out and crawled about like caterpillars on their stomachs for about two hours, but, apart from hearing a German digging-party at work, found out very little. I then went to sleep again till 3.30 a.m., when I wrote out our report of work done during day and sent it to Osbert to sign. (This is done at 3.30 a.m. and p.m. daily.) Then sleep again till about 4.50, when I woke of my own accord, though my runner should have woken me at 4.20, which is half-hour before dawn, and at which time every man stands to arms until broad daylight with his rifle lying on the parapet in front of him. At about 5.30 I gave the word, 'Post day-sentries,' which is the signal to stop standing to arms, and instead of a sentry with fixed bayonets in every bit of trench, one without fixed bayonet is posted in every other bit by bit; I mean one of those marked A. The sketched trench is of course facing the top of the page. After this I seized a little more sleep till about 7, and was relieved by the Sergeant-Major at 8, when I came in here and we had breakfast. It is now 10.30, and Osbert is in the front line.

Our front line is about 150 to 200 yards from the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Boche trench or what remains of it after yesterday's shelling. The space between is the realization of all one has read about battlefields and is ghastly."

*Friday,*

*15th October, 1915.*

"... I am now in old and rather dilapidated trenches behind our lines at Hohenzollern Redoubt (which we took the day before yesterday). We are in the fifth line support-trenches which sounds very safe but isn't. I have had a terribly tiring three days. First we were relieved in our other front trenches on Wednesday at 1 and then started to walk six miles to our billets, after taking nearly two hours to thread the endless communication trenches miles long which lead out near Vermelles. I have never walked all night and seen the day dawn as I marched, before: you see after four days in trenches the men can only march very slowly and as the Brigade Staff failed to send us any guides we couldn't find the way for ages. Added to this, a motor-cyclist ran into us in the dark, and stunned one man and hurt another's leg. At any rate it was 8 a.m. before we 'fetched up' in our billets at Verquogsme. We changed our billets on Thursday morning and on that evening (last night) we started for these trenches at 7.30. After extreme confusion as to where the Staff-Major had assigned us to, we discovered he had given us a piece of trench hardly big enough for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Battalion. Thus the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  had to be shoved into any old trench handy. This house-hunting took some time and it was 3.30 this



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

morning before I composed myself to sleep for one hour before 'stand-to' at 4.30. To-day was spent improving our trench. I buried four men to-day under shell-fire, and read bits out of 'Revelation' over their grave. I had only a New Testament. It was rather moving: just the four men of the grave-digging party and I, but I am very glad to have been able to do it. I got your splendid three letters to-night.

I am writing in our dug-out (comfortable) at 11 p.m. before bed. Our company is now Osbert, Nairn, Lyon, and self. Nairn and Lyon are charming.

My fondest love to all."

*Monday (?)*,

*18th October, 1915.*

"... I am so sorry I haven't written to you for some days, but we have been having such a restless and nerve-racking time since Thursday night that I have seized almost every spare moment to play a little game of shut-eye (and it's usually a very little game). I have not had four hours' sleep on end since Thursday, but I manage to seize 20 minutes or sometimes 1 hour at odd times in even odder places, so I really manage very well and am as happy as can be expected seeing that dear Ivo was killed yesterday or the day before. Osbert and I are miserable about it, for no more lovable person ever stepped. I am terribly sorry for Aunt Mary and Mary, for she loved him very dearly. It is not yet officially stated that he is gone, but I fear it is too much to hope that the rumour is untrue. Such things have hap-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

pened before, and I pray heartily that it is only a rumour: perhaps you will know by the time you get this.

I am in the front line trench again, but our lines are advanced on each side of me so it is like a broad avenue of our men with the Boche at one end and us at the other. A great bombing attack took place yesterday by several Battalions of different Guards Brigades. It was fairly successful, but we lost fairly heavily, even my battalion which sent its bombers up had over 40 casualties.

Yesterday between 10 and 1 we were subjected to a terrific shell-fire, and as our artillery weren't replying we heard only the awful sound of the approaching high explosive shells: and as they burst, belching black smoke, the earth shook and a shower of small stones and earth descended on us with an occasional piece of shell that whirs like a muffled factory engine and finishes with a thud as it strikes the top of the trench. I used to think I was fairly impervious to noise, but the crash upon crash, and their accompanying pillar of black smoke simply upset me, as they pitched repeatedly within 30 or 40 yards, and some even nearer. I don't think I showed I was any more frightened than any one else. Perhaps I wasn't. What made it so racking was that there was nothing to do all the time but sit still waiting for the next, and the next. The strain was awful. I was very glad to get a letter from Daddy which seemed cheerful about the war. Please thank him for it, the time is now 9.15 a.m. I had breakfast about 7, but got up just



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

before 5. My watch last night was from 10.45 to 12.45, and was an uneventful and quiet time.

Now I must seize a little sleep, Moth' darling. God bless you, and I trust we may be relieved to-morrow."

21st October, 1915.

*Trafalgar Day.*

"... There are 15 beds in this ward, about 6 occupied. I feel like a cave man who has discovered how to be warm. This bed with sheets and a hot-water bottle is celestial. When the Battalion comes out of the trenches they are going into to-morrow, the Guards Division is to have a well-earned fortnight's rest. During which there will be some leave, but I don't know whether I shall get any or not. It has made the whole difference to Osbert and I having each other's company, and I hope I go back to him soon, for of course I am not nearly bad enough to be sent to the base. The quiet here seems quite unusual and I sometimes think that motors approaching are shells coming.

I still treasure three photies of you.

Your devoted Son."

OFFICERS' DRESSING STATION,

BÉTHUNE.

23rd October, Saturday, 1915.

"... I hope you are not at all anxious about me as my temperature was normal this morning, and I have just had lunch in bed and then dressed. I feel perfectly



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

well, I am thankful to say, and I shall go back in a day or two (D.V.), as it was mainly that I was ‘run down,’ and these few days’ rest have made me feel another person, and capable of going into a ditch for an indefinite period. The nurses here are quite charming, though mostly old. One of them has just been admiring your photy in my identification disc. I forgot in my last letter to say how much I loved your dream about the harvest field. I thought it was very beautiful (and splendidly worded). I had ‘jelly’ for lunch to-day and thought of Philander Pratt and Lysander Spratt, though I can’t remember their appearances as well as I could wish: ‘pliz’ draw them in your next letter. I am now going to write out the three poems I have written while out here, which I hope you will like.”

### SONG

What man is there, now tell me pray,  
What sorry knave or yeoman,  
That makes his moan wi’ “Welladay,”  
When flouted by a woman?  
Who as the sun above him shines,  
Doth not ha’ done with sorrow,  
And as he lies ’neath summer skies,  
Sings “Hey for luck to-morrow.”

For a pleasant day  
Will drive away  
All lass-engender’d sorrow,  
By moss-green bank,  
And gold-cups rank,  
Sing “*Hey for luck to-morrow!*”



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

Or if he married be perchance,  
And Madam prove a tartar,  
And leads the poor churl such a dance,  
That willingly he'd barter  
His lawful bed-mate for a span  
Of oxen for his plough, Sir,  
Yet one fair day he's glad and gay,  
And surely you'll allow, Sir,

That a pleasant day  
Will drive away  
All lass-engendered sorrow,  
By sweet briar hedge  
Or thymèd sedge,  
Sing "*Hey for luck to-morrow!*"

### LIGHT AND DARKNESS

FRANCE,  
October, 1915.

Once more the Night like some great dark drop scene  
Eclipsing horrors for a brief entr'acte  
Descends, lead-weighty. Now the space between,  
Fringed with the eager eyes of men, is racked  
By spark-tailed lights, curvetting far and high,  
Swift smoke-flecked coursers, raking the dark sky.

But as each sinks in ashes grey, one more  
Rises to fall, and so through all the hours  
They strive like petty empires by the score,  
Each confident of his success and powers,  
And hovering at its zenith each will show  
Pale rigid faces lying dead, below.

And so these lie, tainting the innocent air,  
Until the Dawn, deep veiled in mournful grey,  
Sadly and quietly shall lay them bare,  
The broken heralds of a doleful day.



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## "A BAS LA GLOIRE!"

The powers that be in solemn conclave sat  
And dealt out honour from a large tureen,  
And those unhonour'd said 'twas rather flat,  
Not half so sparkling as it should have been.  
Those honour'd silently pass'd round the hat,  
Then let themselves be freely heard and seen.

And all this time there were a lot of men  
Who were in France and couldn't get away  
To be awarded honours. Now and then  
They died, so others came and had to stay  
Till they died too, and every field and fen  
Was heavy with the dead from day to day.

But there were other men who didn't die  
Although they were in France—these sat in cars,  
And whizzed about with red-band caps, awry,  
Exuding brandy and the best cigars.  
With bands and tabs of red, they could defy  
The many missiles of explosive Mars.

But one there was who used to serve in bars  
And for his pretty wit much fame had got :  
Though really not so fit to serve in wars,  
They made him a staff-colonel on the spot,  
And threw a knighthood in as well, because  
He really had done such an awful lot.

Up fluttered eyebrows (incomes fluttered down),  
His erstwhile yeomanry stood all aghast,  
This Juggernaut, devourer of renown,  
Was he their fellow-mug in days long past ?  
In France he went by train from town to town,  
Men thought his zenith had been reached at last.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

To this the Powers That Be replied, "Oh no!"  
And they discovered (else my mem'ry fails)  
That he had gone by train some months ago  
From Paris with despatches to Marseilles!  
"See here," they cried, "a well-earned D.S.O.  
Because you did not drop them 'neath the rails."

So now from spur to plume he is a star,  
Of all an Englishman should strive to be,  
His one-time patrons hail him from afar  
As "Peerless warrior," "battle-scarred K.G."  
And murmur as he passes in his car,  
"For this and all thy mercies, glory be!"

But all this time the war goes on the same,  
And good men go, we lose our friends and kith,  
The men who sink knee-deep in boosted fame  
Prove that "rewarded courage" is a myth:  
I could sum up by mentioning a name:  
A pseudonym will do, we'll call him Smith.

VERMELLES,  
25th October, 1915.

"I read a novel by a French author, René Bazin, called 'The Nun' which (though rather badly translated) I enjoyed reading. It is about six nuns who keep a school but are turned out by Government, and cast on the world. It is rather sad as the youngest, the heroine, is murdered in the end. I liked to read the old priest's hat was old and worn, 'from being so constantly taken off to a great many inconspicuous people.' Apart from this I have read most of a book by William Le Queux, very intricate and mysterious but



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

rather rubbish withal, called 'The Lost Million.' For the most part I have been so glad to lie quiet that I haven't been very anxious about reading, though please don't think that I have been gasping on my bed! For I've been in very good spirits all the time if a little sleepy.

Now I'm afraid I've got nothing more of interest to say, except how much I love you."

*8th November, 1915.*

"... I have been re-reading 'Henry IV, Part I.' It is wonderful. I love Falstaff cheering on the robbers. 'What, ye fat chuffs? on, bacons, on! Young men must live.' I am awaiting a letter telling me what you think of my 'pomes.' I am afraid silence may betoken indifference, and a kindly wish to let snoring poems lie. I am so glad Nannie liked the brooch I sent her. It is almost fitted for the traditional 'spuin-full o' jam.'\*

I wish I had more news, but it's very boring here now and I'm glad we're moving; though I have been so grateful for the rest, and for my delicious bed. . . ."

\* An allusion to an old Scottish lady who in conversation lightly disposed of the discomfort of "a feeling of cold pudding about you," adding that it was nothing compared to "a spuin-full o' jam behind the brooch."







ON LEAVE



“ Ah, son of my heart, *mo ville astore*, my ten thousand treasures, sure your like was not to be found on all the broad acres of Ireland, and your death has cast a shadow on the country that no sun will ever disperse. Pulse of my heart, *cushla machree*, why did you die from me ? ”

M. M.











## CHAPTER XIV

*“Speaking at a recruiting rally in Cape Town Lieutenant Forbes, who was severely wounded in the Battle of Arras, said: ‘The boys who fell at Delville Wood are not dead. They live with us still, and the Brigade knows that they go over the top with them, every time.’”*

*“THE TIMES,” 1918.*



TOWARDS the end of November Bim came home on leave. His Mother was sitting awaiting him. She heard the front door open and close, and a stir and movement. Then his voice in the hall and his steps leaping up the stairs taking three at a stride to join her. She heard him call her name twice as he approached the drawing-room, and then the door was wide open, and the room was suddenly full of his presence.

It is Miss Thackeray who in one of her books makes the excellent remark that people about to leave seem already to have departed, and those who have but just arrived are, in a sense, not yet there.

However well observed this may be in general, Bim made a glowing exception to the rule; he was so much there the room throbbed with him, and he brought such a sense of joy and vitality with him that you felt



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

he might have made leaden chrysalides in cast-iron cocoons turn into butterflies.

Then the telephone started, and notes flew. It snowed hair-dressers. Tailors sat for hours in the hall, and white gardenias in silver-foil and cotton wool arrived, and lay on the hall table, in tissue paper.

He had a cavernously-sounding cough, and a temperature that registered 100, but appeared and asseverated that he felt perfectly well. The only result of the suggestion of a doctor's visit being that the Coon Band was engaged on the spot. Then followed small dinner parties, expeditions in the 'two-seater,' and Plays, Plays, Plays.

\* \* \* \* \*

"To which of the two fairies were you saying good night so affectionately?"

"To both."

Despite the War, as far as Bim was concerned, the World went very well then.

At an age when children, newly enfranchised, are apt to look upon their parents as at least dull if not inconvenient, Bim appeared to enjoy the company of his, even to seek it, and as had been his custom since childhood, he showed his feeling towards his Father and Mother in the most endearing ways. They divided the precious portion of time between his Scottish home and London; and his Mother, in recalling these clear wintry days, can see him now on the hillside with the younger children, pulling their toboggans for them up the steep returning climb.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He was reading, during these days, a novel by Compton Mackenzie, and Sir Thomas Mallory in the large edition illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. He read aloud according to his wont, his favourite bits from Dickens; the description of the Cratchit family's Christmas dinner, and those two admirable and little-known essays called "Our Bore," and "The Begging-Letter Writer," that may be found in "Reprinted Pieces." Bim read aloud with immense enjoyment to himself, and with great zest and discrimination.

Then came the evening when his leave was over, and he must away again. The letters that follow bear record to his happiness during these days, and his warm response to those who so willingly and utterly had done all they could to make him happy.

*"What cruel hand of cursèd foe unknown  
Hath cropt the stalk which bore so fair a flower?  
Untimely cropt, before it full were grown  
And clean defacèd in untimely hour.  
Great loss to all that ever him did see,  
Great loss to all, but bitter loss to me."*



“ God must be glad one loves His world so much.”

ROBERT BROWNING.




## CHAPTER XV

*"For the good are always merry  
Save by an evil chance,  
And the merry love the fiddle  
And the merry love to dance."*

W. B. YEATS.

11th December, 1915.

*(On his way back to France after leave.)*

"ROWN and Charlie McDonald\* accompanied me to the station where we stood and talked (Willson as well) for a while. Suddenly Mr. Hutcheons swam into my ken and I grasped him by the hand and talked to him on all subjects for some time. At Galashiels I attracted a good deal of attention by my civilian clothes and appearance of good spirits, but as the guard (a brother of Fairbairn the mason who died some years ago) showed interest in me and talked about the war I think most people were mollified. What amazed me was the number of people who seem to be undertaking the arduous journey from Innerleithen to Walkerburn after presumably spending an evening of riotous gaiety in that maelstrom of social 'crushes' of which we hardly seem to realize the proximity!

I read your darling note in the train, where it fell out of my coat, into which you thrust it, when I was un-

\* The keeper and the blacksmith at Glen.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

dressings. . . . I do love you, for loving me so much. On arrival at 34 I had a bath and was in the middle of a tray-breakfast when Docé arrived. He had another tray-breakfast in my room and we sallied forth in fine weather which developed into pouring rain about 11. We went to Allan, Herbert, & Greening, and settled about the boots, also to Cording and purchased some oddments which, not having a cheque-book, I put down to you, but will repay. Docé, Richard Norton, and I lunched at the Carlton where I saw every one I ever knew, and was introduced to the lovely Lady Curzon. Docé had business in the afternoon, so Richard and I spent the afternoon (pouring with rain) going from place to place in his car, finishing up at tea with the Farquharsons. I had intended giving a dinner, but notice was so short that I gave up the idea and went to a huge dinner given by Mrs. John Gordon, who remembers us at West Amesbury or at Wilsford. Winnie and Lionel took me, and Richard Norton and Hugo Rumbold and the Droghedas, Madame d'Erlanger and Louvima and Sloper Mackenzie, and lots of others were there. Wolkoff was there too. We danced afterwards, and at 11.30 Winnie and I and others went on to a party at the Cavendish given by Colonel Fitzgerald who married Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland. Here I danced for a bit with Myrtle, and soon afterwards Winnie and I went back to the Gordons'. The young Duchess of Sutherland, Rosemary Leveson-Gower and some others were at the Cavendish. We helped to make things move at the Gordons', and Hugo was extremely amusing, and so



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

were we all. They had the Coons, and after much dancing, supping, and hullabalooing I parted from Richard Norton at the door of 34, Queen Anne's Gate, at 4.55 a.m., after a most enjoyable evening.

I had intended to give a farewell breakfast at 11.30 next morning at the Carlton, but suddenly (at 9.30) I discovered that my train went at 9.35, and was in despair. Fortunately another went at 10.30 which I caught, after fond but telephonic farewells to the Hell-Kittens.\*

A great delay at Folkestone, the boat didn't start till about 3.30. It was rough and nearly every one except me was sick. I didn't feel anything to write home about! I met several friends on the boat, men in the K.R.R. and R. B. Wilson, who was at Winchester with me, and Parry, who was a master there for a term or two with us.

I joined them, and we dined (six of us) at the Folkestone Hotel and slept at the Hotel de Paris. We got up at our ease, lunched this morning and caught the 1.4 which got to La Gorgue at 9.30 at night. Here I was met by a groom and horse, and I trotted about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to our Quartermaster's Stores, where I am now writing and about to go to bed. The battalion comes out of trenches to-morrow night and goes for 6 days' rest. So I have timed my return rather well. How I loved being at Glen with you and darling Daddy and all the others. I'll write to him to-morrow.

Now I am very sleepy so will stop. My vow (at least it's not a vow, but a resolve) is still unbroken."

\* The *sobriquet* in the family for some of Bim's young lady friends.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*Monday,*

*13th December, 1915.*

*[To his Father.]*

"... I am back with the Company now, quite cheerful and comfortable and we shan't go into the trenches for a week. I loved being at Glen more than I have loved anything for a long time, and I want to thank you for making my leave the perfect time it was. The post has just this moment come and a letter from you. Yes, we did enjoy ourselves, and I am looking forward to my next leave much as I used to long for leave-out-days at Winchester. I met several old Winchester friends on the boat and dined with them at Boulogne, slept comfortably at the Hotel de Paris and caught the 1.4 after an early lunch next day.

Thank you a thousand times for paying my bills for me, and doing all you have for me. I will always try and deserve your love.

Your devoted Son,

BIM."

*21st December, 1915.*

"... I am writing this from our dug-out in a very muddy trench to wish you all the very happiest Christmas under the circumstances. I do pray that Christopher is all right and that we may be all together next Christmas. I am so glad David is progressing well. During our rest in Merville I sang at three concerts, with success. We had a dinner on Sunday night, about forty-three people, mostly Grenadiers. After dinner I sang four or



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

five songs, including 'The Laird o' Cockpen,' which people liked very much.

I am sorry I have got nothing in time for Xmas for Steenie and Dave, but I will try for the New Year.

Now with all my love, and millions of kisses and prayers for all our wide-apart happy Christmases, I am ever your loving

BIM."

*Sunday,*

*9th January, 1916.*

"It is Sunday morning and is a fine day, though it rained early in the morning. I have been to 'La Grande Messe' in the lovely Norman church, to which the two old ladies, on whom I am billeted, invited me. One is rather like a withered edition of Aunt L——, and the other a much less stout model of Lady ——. They are both very nice. The music and the singing were very good, I thought, and though I couldn't understand all the sermon it was a much more lively and less monotonous oration than we ever get in England. After it was over they took me round the church and showed me a series of oil paintings on the walls representing the progress of the Cross, etc. These were dimly chromographic, I thought, but no words of praise were sufficiently laudatory for them in the eyes of the old ladies, in whose opinion their chief merit was that each cost 'mille francs' (£40), and, as though I had expressed incredulity at this fabulous price, it was explained to me that the picture cost 900 francs, and the brass frame 100 francs, so there could be no doubt about it, whatever.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Thank you so much for the letters from old friends. I was very touched by ——'s letter. Phil B. J.'s letter I liked too. My old ladies here have seen the photographs of you and Stephen on the mantelpiece in my room, and told me this morning how distinguée you looked. After church I came back with one old lady. While the other went off to another service, I think. The two of us caroused for some time on very old vin blanc and powdery biscuits. I couldn't refuse to drink with her, and I am now under a promise to return at 2 p.m. to drown my cares in a glass of cassis, a delicious beverage made of black currants.

I have read quite a lot of Keats. I like 'Lamia.' To read 'St. Agnes' Eve' is exactly like unpacking one of your hampers from 'Fortnum & Mason.' "

*17th January, 1916.*

"... I have just this moment remembered that your birthday was 14th, and I have not written to say how much I love you. It is impossible to state this amount in writing, but please forgive me for having remembered as late as this. I pray that we may both live many many more years as happily as we have lived together for 18, for there is no one who loves his Mother more (or with better reason) than I do. This afternoon we go back to trenches, and out again in 48 hours. Now that I come to think of it it was on your birthday that the Boche shelled my lines, and I am sure that you were there looking after me, as Nanny saw you once



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

in the spirit beside my bed when I was ill, do you remember?

This is just a short note to let you know how much I love you and how happy I am that you are my Mother, and not some one else. I am longing to see you, and hope the news of Christopher is good. I am going to send you a delightful book called 'Arcadian Adventures.'

And now 'God bless us—every one' (as Tiny Tim said), and may we soon all be together after this wretched war is over.

P.S.—I think I shot a German the other day; if I did, God rest his soul."

4th March, 1916.

[*To his Father.*]

"... Thank you so much for your letter. I expect you are back on the Spey by now. I often think of you in the room with the woollen portrait of Mary Queen of Scots.\*

We are still at this same place—with billets widely scattered between mal-odorous farm buildings: but we go to-morrow, as far as we know, to Poperinghe (or, as it is usually called, 'Popinjay'). We expect to live in huts or tents there: my feelings about tents are not to be described—so I pray it may be huts. After ten days we shall probably go into trenches at Ypres. At present we hear all day long about the horrors of Ypres, and it really does seem a very nasty place. If one sandbag is

\* This alludes to a picture that, in the carpet stitch beloved of our great-grandmothers, delineates in a medium more peculiar than beautiful the features of the ill-destined Queen



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

put on the parapet without previously being covered with mud, you are at once shelled. The line is broken up, and there are several gaps of 50, 100, or 200 yards in our front line.

We are all gripping our gas-helmets, as the last occupants were just getting used to being gassed twice a week, though the gas was never followed by an attack. On the whole it seems advisable to mind one's p's and q's. But of course people always indulge in a good croak before any change of this sort, and I don't really expect it will be at all bad. Other regiments have gone through with it, so we shall do so too, only a hundred times better.

This afternoon we are going to practise a bombing attack in some fortifications we have been making of turf and sandbags during the past 5 days. Directly a party storms a piece of trench, bombing-parties go out on either side at once, and bomb down the trench, first throwing bombs, and then sending bayonet-men forward who report 'all's clear' before they close up and throw more bombs over the next traverse. If they come to a communication-trench they shout, party consists of 2 Bayonet-men (who shout 'all's clear'), 1 Bomb-thrower, 2 Bomb-carriers, 1 N.C.O., . . . gap of 10 yds., . . . 3 Wire-carriers, 5 Spade (or hook) carriers, 1 Explosive-carrier or reserve bomber.

So you see it is all carefully thought out and arranged, but I should not much care to be the bombers who are left to get back through their own wire as best they can."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*6th March, 1916.*

“ . . . We are now about 9 miles from the Field-Marshal's Viscounty, and expect to go into trenches there in about 8 days' time. We are in a Rest-Camp here, but snow and rain have so far prohibited the displays of activity which usually signalise our arrival in a Rest-Camp of any sort.

Half the battalion are in tents, the remainder in huts ; the latter are quite comfortable. We sleep in huts divided into cubicles (6 to a hut) which are no colder than you would expect. We mess as a battalion while in camps like this, which isn't such fun as messing under company arrangements, but as the mess tent is in a state of continual frowst and is the only warm place in the vicinity, it is not so bad. Osbert, Nairn, and I went into the town (Popinjay) for tea and dinner yesterday, but it is two miles away and the dinner inferior : added to which we lost our way in the dark coming back. The whole camp is a sea of mud, and one walks from hut to hut on trench-boards covered with wire-netting.

Ever your devoted Son.”



“I have the feeling of Immortality very strongly within me, and I look on Death as a friend whom there is no need to fear.”

E. W. T.










*Edward Wyndham Tennant.*  
*14<sup>th</sup> Grenadier Guards.*



## CHAPTER XVI

12th March, 1916.

“T is Sunday morning, fine but cold, and there is a lot of artillery-shooting going on in the distance.

As it is the first Sunday in Lent I am going to church, and to Holy Communion. All sorts of odd rumours are about, concerning leave re-starting, and the trenches we are going into. At present we look like going up to them in four days' time.

This is just a love-line, darling Moth'. I'll write again soon.

Devoted son.

P.S.—I saw a picture of you in the *Daily Mirror* yesterday. I appreciate the good old English name of the lady who is lending her house for the concert! I hope that her *Bach* will be as good as her *Beit*.”

March 16th, 1916.

“ . . . We came 6 miles by train last night and occupied dug-outs on the bank of the canal and in the ram-parts. There has been a lot of shelling, and we had a man badly hit this morning. As I stood in the door of our dug-out, about 25 feet from the water's edge, it



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

was as though greedy fish were continually rising, as the bits of shell plopped into the canal. Most of the shells burst behind us or in front of us, thank God; but the noise was tremendous, and I feel grateful for the steel roof and walls of our dug-out. It is like a barrel in shape inside, and has a very thick roof of sandbags and loose bricks. The circular part cannot be seen from outside, but it is made of pressed steel, and will stop anything below a 6-inch shell, I believe. There is plenty of room inside, and we all slept on camp beds in it last night, and were quite comfortable. Osbert got up with the lark and went round the front line (2 miles away) with the commanding officer. After lunch Osbert and I went for a walk through the town. I have never seen such an abomination of desolation—not a single whole roof in the town. Shell holes 30 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep full of green water; twisted iron staircases standing alone in the ruins of a house—everything knocked down except the tottering top story bathroom which stands on a pyramid of débris. We found some rather good Dutch tiles (which I will try and secure later), and some heavy gargoyles from the Cloth-hall.

Then a lot of shrapnel started coming over, and we both sought our dug-outs (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away) with dignified haste. A small piece of shrapnel hit the ground between his left foot and my right foot as we went along. Thus in a reserved and stately, but none the less acute panic we reached our dug-out in safety, for which thank God."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*March 17th, 1916.*

"We came into these trenches last night about 9 a.m., after being 24 hours in very cosy and comfortable dug-outs on the canal bank, where we were heavily shelled and had one man wounded. In these trenches we lead a complete 'through the looking-glass' existence, working from 7 in the evening to 4.30 in the morning, and sleeping (with intervals for meals) all day. We breakfast at 10, lunch at 2.30, dinner at 10 p.m., and supper about 2 or 3 a.m. Last night the servants did their usual disappearing trick and we had no dinner till 1.30 a.m.

I hope leave may start at the end of the month. I often think of how kind God has been in giving you David to be at home when Christopher and I have both to be away from you."

David had made a slow convalescence after a serious attack of diphtheria, and was therefore at home with the family, as he could not yet return to school.

Sometimes Bim would rhyme his letters; his beautiful poem of "Home Thoughts in Laventie" reached his Mother in letter form. The concluding verse of the following letter in verse was added on Bim's hearing that his Grandmother had joined the circle at home.

*Easter, 1916.*

"I write these lines to send my love,  
Across the English Channel,  
Towards a house of flint and stone  
And many an oaken panel,  
Upon whose lawns some boys I spy  
With voices gay and scrannel.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Upon the stream the motor-boat  
Petrolically grunts,  
And round about, and in and out,  
Go dinghies, rafts, and punts,  
While in the withy-beds, with Bob,  
David has moor-hen hunts.

Then Stephen in his garden gay,  
Grows every kind of flower,  
I cannot tell their names, and if  
I could, 'twould take an hour.  
And very often food is cooked  
Within a Round House tower—

That stands down in the orchard  
And for very many years  
Has been the scene of fights between  
Roundheads and Cavaliers,  
Who now are fighting side by side  
As Britain's musketeers.

And One within the Stone Parlour  
Holds happy Easter Court ;  
Another catches silvery trout  
His best beloved sport,  
I think on these the whole day long  
And happy is the thought.

. . . . .

P.S.—Another verse I now must pen  
Because by chance I hear,  
That Wilsford's safe and tily roof  
Now covers one most dear,  
O, may she be our Easter guest  
For this, and many a year."

While Bim was in France during the Spring of 1916  
he wrote to a friend to whom he had promised a copy of



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“Recognita.” This is a book written by Charles Gatty, and published by Murray, which gives, in the form of a letter to the widow, the author’s expressed remembrance of his friend. The result is a very vivid and sensitive portrait, and those who care for the memory of George Wyndham may well be grateful; for this book remains, six years after his death, the only published record.\* “Recognita” was a favourite book with Bim, and on this occasion when writing promising to procure a copy, he chose to couch his letter in the style of Kai Lung.†

[*To A. B.*]

*March, 1916.*

“In the first place, O Damsel, fairer than any Mancha maid, aye, fairer than Orange-scented Pekoe herself, whose feet are like rose petals, and her hands fine wax, even she who tends the Garden in the Centre of the Earth, may thy prosperity be more durable than the elephants of Ming!

They—sagacious beasts, show no outward or visible signs of decay, though as 1257 generations of my fathers do verify, they must even now be approaching middle-age.

This feather-brained and entirely negligible person drove the horses of happiness among the singing stars, and over the twy-horned moon on the eve whereon came the fragrant missive upon whose creamy surface the

\* Since writing this the Collected Essays have appeared, edited by Charles Whibley; but these give but a partial presentation. There must yet be written a just account and appreciation of George Wyndham’s life.

† “The Wallet of Kai Lung,” by Ernest Bramah.



finely cut and well-tipped quill was driven by thy tapering, and in all other respects incomparable fingers.

Little did this unworthy person expect so perfect a communication to be delivered at his unprepossessing and nomadic address. His unpared and otherwise cloddish fingers are even now shaking like poplars in the wind.

As the Ancestors smiled their bland and beatific smile upon my well-loved Uncle, inviting him to an ivory and lacquer seat in their midst, or ever this petty brawl was noised to the auricular appendages, so may this pitifully incompetent but ever ambitious young person earn the smiles of those same apparently immobile but in reality perpetually nodding Deities, by spreading abroad the fair reports of his avuncular relative, on whom be Peace.

In this fellow's feeble and entirely immaterial opinion this can best be accomplished by his writing to his admirable and constantly-thought-of Female Parent, to the end that she may send this well-wishing (but as some think rightly downtrodden) wielder of this mechanical and, for the first time in his recollection, well-writing pen, the book called 'Recognita.' Upon the gracious reception of which this fellow will send it to thy in every way desirable abode.

Now the Heavens smile on Kai Lung! from whom this grotesquely-featured person's epistolary style is shamelessly borrowed. This happy but feather-headed opium-eater hath now given up the simple but Europæan decadence which whilom was his snare, and hath turned



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

his mind to the age of the world, and his hands to the temporal goods of any simple ones from whom by skilful illegality they may be committed to his own capacious pockets.

But verbosity is the bane of Time! So with every form of salutation and obeisance that doth not necessitate arising from the floor, or any other uncalled-for and inconvenient exercise, this fellow traces the word—light on the lips but bitter in the hearing—Farewell.”







ON LEAVE



“Home—what a perfect place.”



## CHAPTER XVII

*"And shall I ever bid these joys farewell?  
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life."*

KEATS.



TOWARDS the end of March, 1916, Bim was once more on home leave; and this time the days were divided between Easton Grey, Wilsford, and London. He developed an acute attack of influenza which kept him in bed for at least four days, but fortunately he fell ill while at home, and his only regret was that this chill precluded the carrying out of his intention to visit David and his friends at West Downs.

During this spell of leave Bim read De la Mare's "The Three Mullah Mulgars," "The Republic of Plato" in the Golden Treasury Series, translated by Davies and Vaughan; Samuel Rogers' "Table Talk" (a book Bim met with then, for the first time, and one which gave him great pleasure), "Poems of Memory and Hope," by Newbolt, and the collection of verse that is called "A Thousand and One Gems." His marks, long slips of torn paper, are in this volume now, and they stand respectively between the following poems: "The Battle of Agincourt" by Michael Drayton,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Prince Henry's speeches on the death of Hotspur, and in defence of himself, the description of Young Harry, and King Henry's Soliloquy on Sleep, the character of King Henry V by his father, and King Harry's address to his soldiers.

The next mark stands at Lycidas, and yet another at two poems called respectively "Immortality," and "Intimations of a Previous Existence."

"Methinks we must have known some former state  
More glorious than our present ; and the heart  
Is haunted by dim memories. . . .  
. . . Remembrance makes the poet : 'tis the Past  
Lingering within him with a keener sense  
Than is upon the thoughts of common men  
Of what has been, that fills the actual world  
With unreal likenesses of lovely shapes,  
That were, and are not . . .  
The more his power, the greater is his grief.  
. . . . .

Are we not fallen from some noble star ? "

This was an idea well known to Bim, and definitely accepted by him, as his own poem called "Re-incarnation" reveals.

I too remember distant golden days  
When even my soul was young ; I see the sand  
Whirl in a blinding pillar towards the band  
Of orange sky-line 'neath a turquoise blaze—  
(Some burnt-out sky spread o'er a glistening land)  
—And slim brown jargoning men in blue and gold,  
I know it all so well, I understand  
The ecstasy of worship ages-old.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Hear the first truth : The great far-seeing soul  
Is ever in the humblest husk ; I see  
How each succeeding section takes its toll  
In fading cycles of old memory.  
And each new life the next life shall control  
Until perfection reach Eternity.

During these days of convalescence Bim also read through the pages in galley proof of his own letters, and those of his brother, then in the Dardanelles; a privately printed volume of these being at this time in preparation. This he thoroughly enjoyed, living over again the days and occurrences of which his letters told, and ever remembering fresh detail and comment during their perusal. He added several treasures to his already excellent store of printers' errors, of which the local newspaper's allusion to "the battle-scarred warrior" stood at the head. (In their first issue, it will be remembered, this veteran figured as "bottle-scarred," only to reappear, in their next issue—when they endeavoured to correct themselves—as "battle-scared"; providing an excellent warning of how lamentably easy it is to go, with the best will in the world, from bad to worse.) In this particular series of proofs Bim took great pleasure in Britain's negotiations in the Balkan States figuring as "Sir Edward Grey's Balham Diplomacy."

During these days his Mother remembers Bim asking her to tell him the story of "The Long Leather Bag."

This is a tale belonging to his nursery days.

"What makes you think of it now?" she asked.

"I remembered it when I was away, and I couldn't recall how it went exactly, and I made a mental note to



get you to tell it to me when I should see you again."

So the story was told: "*With a wig, with a wag, with a long leather bag*"; a tale that Bim's Mother heard from her Mother, who in turn had received it from her Mother's lips, and which, so far as we know, is not to be found in print. "*Stroke me, stroke me, said the cow, I haven't been stroked these seven years,*" and as Bim's Mother recalls all this she knows quite clearly that had Bim stayed on among us here as he was then, never, though he had lived till the age of sixty, would he have outgrown, in some things, the ways of a child.

On April 3rd Bim returned to France, and it is in his voice, just as he used to sing it, his Mother hears the words:

"Partir, c'est mourir un peu,  
C'est mourir à ce qu'on aime,  
On laisse un peu de soi-même  
En toute heure et dans tous lieux.  
Et on part, et c'est un jeu  
Et jusqu'à l'adieu suprême,  
C'est son âme que l'on sème  
Que l'on sème en chaque adieu. .  
Partir, c'est mourir un peu."



## CHAPTER XVIII

*"I smell the rose above the mould."*

Hood.



IN the May of that year, 1916, a Baby was expected in the family, and it was with reference to the arrival of this brother or sister that Bim wrote so often, and so affectionately.

"I hope you are keeping well as regards your darling Baby. I often think of how happy it must make you."

In order to spare Bim's Mother as much as possible the burden of the daily anxiety, a post was obtained for Bim for a short time upon Sir John Ponsonby's staff. It was against Bim's inclination, but he looked upon it unselfishly as the following letter, received by his Mother five months later, reveals.

*27th September, 1916.*

"Although I am a stranger to you I cannot refrain from writing, for I feel as if I had known your son well, so much had my son written and spoken of him. They went out together in August, 1915, and during those 6 or 7 weeks before the Battle of Loos were constantly together. My son became much attached to yours. One of the most beautiful things I heard of your son



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

was what he said about his reason for being on the Staff for the short period, during which you were expecting the birth of your Baby. He said the more he felt he disliked being in a safe place, the more he seemed to be giving up for you, and because it was a real sacrifice for him not to be sharing daily dangers with his friends he felt in equal measure he was showing his love and tenderness for you. This deeply impressed my son, who wrote of it to me, and ever since I have felt a great tenderness for your boy. I trust you will forgive my writing to you.

H. M."

Characteristically Bim made the best of what at first was uncongenial, and converted his new experience into something good.

9<sup>th</sup>.

" . . . I got here this morning and everyone has been very nice to me. I am to be A.D.C. to General Fielding, and help with anything that requires it. I worked in the Office this afternoon looking people up in the Army List, and entering their particulars into an enormous ledger.

I am in a comfortable room, and Lomas (Bim's servant) is very happy. The General is very nice. No news as it has been a quiet day."

14<sup>th</sup>.

" . . . I am now and have been for 3 days Assistant Staff Captain (Lieutenant still of course) to Sir John Ponsonby's brigade. He is most charming. I could not imagine a more delightful or considerate general. I



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

spent 3 days at Div. Headquarters and worked very hard, and was sorry to come here till I found what a heart-worthy person Sir John Ponsonby is.

I am acting now every night in 'The Fancies,' a very good show which plays to crowded houses. They are all very nice fellows. There are 4 other officers and 3 soldiers, and all are really good.

The first part is a Pierrot business. Great fun, and the second half just ordinary turns; with a 'Sketch' as well. I sing a song in the first half and two in the second, as well as being in all the choruses. It is huge fun. Lovely scenery, splendid properties, make-up, footlights, and everything to make it complete. I have played 3 nights now. I was told I was best to-night. Eric Greer came last night, and I am dining with him to-morrow.

Our show lasts from 6 to 8.15, though it usually starts about 6.10, and finishes a little later than advertised."

10th.

"... I am now settled comfortably at Div. H.Q., and everyone is especially nice to me. I went out riding to-day with the General. I rode the Prince of Wales' horse. The Corps Commander came in this morning and spoke very kindly to me. He is a charming man. I dined with Lionel Tennyson to-night. He is Staff Captain to the 60th Div.

I have been kept pretty busy with clerical work since I came.

We are living in one house, working in another and



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

we sleep in a third, but all three are quite close together. The other A.D.C. is Esmond Elliot, a brother of Minto's. He is very nice, I like him extremely, he's in some Scottish Yeomanry. . . ."

16th.

" . . . I have just got your 2nd letter, for which I thank you. I went for a ride with Sir John Ponsonby, Jack Dyer, and Raymond de Mareuil this afternoon. 150 high-explosive shells had dropped into the field we rode through, only that very morning. Jack Dyer is awfully nice: he is Staff Captain, and de Mareuil is Interpreter, and talks English well. The Brigade Major Beckwith Smith is quite charming. I could not desire to be among nicer people. Everyone has found my handwriting very legible, and Elliot told me that the Divisional Staff considered I had worked very hard during the short time I was with them.

My duties are to copy out recommendations for medals into books, and to check figures, it is Sir John Dyer's job really. I help him. Also I inspect the billets and rifles and gas-helmets of the Orderlies, telephone clerks, and cyclists. Quite a large portion of my work is telling the General the date.

Do send me out one or two of my old poems to work away upon. . . ."

20th.

"Thank you so much for the pen and for your letter, and for the lovely little leaf. I am back with the Div. now, at work in Q. office, as the Brigade has gone up to the line, and they thought I would learn



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

more with the Division. I agree absolutely with your letter, and please send me Worple Flit to finish. I want to send you some new poems for you to pass judgment on.

I have read half-way through 'Pendennis'; and like it very well, but Thackeray, in my estimation, doesn't approach Dickens. There are so few people in it one would like to meet, although it is very easy to liken one's acquaintances to characters in the book. The snobs are all very well drawn, and by snobbishness he makes one turn against characters who at first seem likeable. There is hardly a person except Warrington and Foker whom I really like: and what opposite types these two are! Pendennis himself I can't say I care for: my opinion about him ebbs and flows. The minor parts in the caste are wonderfully well drawn, but where is the genial climate, the glorious kindness of Dickens? Mr. Wagg . . . who appeared in the local paper as '— Wagg Esq.,' is amusing, and Captain Shandon and Costigan are well drawn.

I've been reading the 'Border Ballads' of which I never weary. I love them. How clearly I remember your saying them to us, in nursery days, long ago; I am so glad you made me learn Tamlane by heart; or was mine the merry Goss-hawk? I never realized what stores you had in your memory till I got the book of them. I continue to sing at 'the Fancies' every night, and I believe have made quite a good hit.

I hope little Carlow is well and strong? Please give him my love. . . ."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

20th.

" . . . Here are some of my 'pomes.' I hope you will like them? They are widely different in character. It is difficult to know where to end a ballad, so I have chosen a gurgling finish. . . . This is only just a love-line to tell you how I loved getting the little Andalusian charm, and what a happy Easter I spent. It was a beautiful day, and I went to the Holy Communion in the morning. Then I went to enquire after General Ponsonby who has not been well the last day or two. After tea I rode leisurely about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the 55th Co. R.E., with whom I spent a most delightful evening. They had a good pianist so we had 'moosit' and great fun.

The only people there who I knew before were Heath and Bury, who is in the Scots Guards (though knowing none in a party seldom has much silencing effect on me). The blank book arrived safely—it will be most useful. I shall find something to write in it soon. . . ."

28th.

" . . . I rode with the General to inspect various battalions, transport-horses this morning. Then we came back, got into a motor and went about 2 miles in it to meet Sir Douglas Haig.

I have just bought some things for my god-son, Wilfrid Gough's boy, who has been christened George Wyndham Gough. I shall have his name put on them.

I still perform gaily every night; it is meat and drink



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

to me, and I shall be sorry when we close to-morrow night.

You need not worry about me, if I should return to the battalion towards the middle of next month, nothing will happen for a fortnight after that as we are coming out for a rest. I hope everything is going well with you, I pray there may be no trouble. Of course I will not agitate to go back to the battalion until you are perfectly well.

My fondest love is always with you."

*1st May.*

" . . . Just a short love-line (for I am very busy) to tell you what a delightful day I had yesterday. It was a sort of leave-out day, tiff-tiff\* and all! I got passes from every one necessary and started off on my journey to see Adrian at 10.40 a.m. It was a gorgeous day and I was very, very happy to be free and dashing through Spring. I saw every sort of animal and bird, partridges, crows, Benjamin Bun-johns, dozens of magpies, and two roe-deer. Adrian had lunched when I got there, but he found me a good 'noon-chew,' and I walked about with him after lunch. After tea he went off to Boulogne. When I got there at 6.30 I went to a Cinema and came back and waited for him. Due at 8. He caught the 9 p.m. boat, and sent me a note to say so. I had dinner by myself, but saw innumerable people I knew, including Major Alston and Esmond Elliot, who are both on the Divisional Staff. They just missed the boat

\* Motor-bicycle.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Adrian had caught, and were cross about it, poor things, but food and drink soon cheered them up, and they cursed the Government after dinner with all their old vigour. I had thought of tiff-tiffing back that night, but on second thoughts I took a bedroom at the Folkestone and slept till 3.15, when I was called. I was on the road by 4, and whistled merrily back. I had a puncture, but found some nice Flying Corps men who mended it for me while I had breakfast at an Inn at seven o'clock. I got back by 8.30. I enjoyed it hugely, and am not a bit tired. It is another lovely day, and everything is perfect. Do you remember the May Day School Treats we used to have at Wilsford? I wonder if there is one to-day. I am longing to hear the good news, and I pray you may bear your darling Baby safely.

BIM."

[*To his Father.*]

" . . . I am now writing about a publisher, at whose trotters I propose to cast my pearls. I have written one little thing . . . (which of our cooks used to spell it as a trifle?) which I hope you will like.

I am deeply sorry about Ego. I have written to Grandmamma. . . .

The weather is still glorious, I ride every day. I am beginning to get a sort of position in the conversation at meals—that is not seeming too sure of myself, and yet not maintaining silence, nor swinging a wordless face above my plate as W. T. no doubt would 'at table.' Everyone is very nice though unanimous in condemna-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

tion of the Government. I feel tired sometimes, of defending people ! ”

*9th May.*

“ . . . The General came back last night, and General Heyworth who had taken his place, went back to his brigade in the trenches yesterday, only to be shot through the head and killed early this morning. He was so popular, such a tradition, in addition to being the finest looking soldier in the Division. I spent the whole morning with him the day before yesterday, and that always brings Death closer to one, don't you think so ? We made a big wreath for him ; I am very sorry about his death.”

On the 24th of May Bim's infant sister Hester was born, and she died on the same day.

Only one of Bim's letters will be given here from the many he wrote, for to give all would emphasise a sorrow already too great for adequate expression.

“ . . . I cannot tell you what I feel about this great sorrow that has come to you, and to all of us. After all your happy preparations, how cruel it seems. We will be doubly loving and unselfish to you, and yet I know nothing can make up for this blow. I know how much this meant to you. I am longing to see you and comfort you in this sorrow. I am glad you have Stephen with you. I feel sure he will be a son of comfort, a son of consolation. You know I have never been able to bear to think of your being miserable, so do not be too un-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

happy for my sake, and get strong again. . . . This is just a love-line to tell how much I am thinking of you. If only I could see you myself. I think of you night and day.

Ever your devoted son."

" . . . How I wish I could be with you during this time of sorrow.

I have finished 'Worple Flit'; the high standard of originality required in the witch's expletives is rather difficult to keep up! The end is vague, but I think it would be a mistake to finish it prosaically; I prefer to leave it indefinite, though people may ask the well-known question, 'And *then* what?'\*

I am reading Keats. His sonnet on Chapman's Homer and the one on The Flower and the Leaf. Both exquisite. What marvellous beauty. You first wrote to me about the last mentioned at Winchester, do you remember? '*O what a power bath white simplicity. . . .*' I like finding them all again."

" . . . I am now going to write and tell you about a very nice little jaunt on a tiff-tiff that I am in the middle of . . . because I want to cheer you. It is Sunday night, and I started out from P . . . this morning at 11 having got leave, and I arrived at Dunkirk without mishap at 12. It is about 23 miles. Here I lunched with four officers of the Scots Guards whom I met there and who very kindly asked me to join them, thus I

\* One of the phrases of Bim's early childhood.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

avoided a lonely meal. After lunch they went down to the plage, and I mounted at 2.25 and rode towards Calais, which town I reached in an hour and took a room at this hotel; the Grand. I had a bath, and having deposited my m. bicycle in a garage, I took a voiture and drove out to the Duchess of Sutherland's hospital, hoping to find there Diana and Rosemary Leveson-Gower. Alas, no one at all; but one of the surgeons Lane was at Winchester with me, and I had a very pleasant talk with him. The nurses and sisters were all so kind to me. I made a point of asking for Charles Ford,\* who looks nicer than ever. He has rather a Christopherian cast of countenance. By the way I saw a little Belgian child to-day in the street, who reminded me so much of Stephen; he had the same long curls round his ears, falling almost to his shoulders, and he had that very 'scrunching' look of non-comprehension you see in the faces of very young children. I blew a kiss to him through the 'compunction-window'† of my voiture. I had tea and dinner at the hospital, and returned to my hotel quite early, where I am now writing in the hall; where a very lively group of French officers is also sitting. It is just five minutes to 10.

I shall enjoy a very comfortable night in the lovely bed, compared to my usual canvas couch, but O how I wish I were near you, and going to sleep in my

\* This was the driver of the Fiat car that Bim's Father had given to the hospital.

† In Bim's family this is the name acquired by the small oval window in the back of a motor-car; owing to the clouds of dust it reveals in the wake of the car.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

own room with John Wesley, and Nelson, and Saint John and Saint Mark in china on the mantelpiece (which up to a short time ago also held my very early map of Treasure Island in a red leather frame). To-morrow I return leisurely to P . . . after what will have been a very pleasant little jaunt.

I hope you like my verses? I await your opinion with anxiety. Are there any thrushes' nests in the walled garden this year? And how are the dogs, Roly and Timsie; and Rookster, does he still keep up his pretence of being a mendicant Fakir in tatters hopping limply after crumbs? I think of Ruddock and the Lonely Boy on the Heath, and am having a good inward laugh over all our old jokes as I think of them. I wish more than ever I were with you, darling Moth'. I will never do anything to make you unhappy because I love you more than any son has ever loved his Mother, and with better reason."

*July 15th.*

" . . . I am getting rather anxious about you and fear you are not getting strong as quickly as you ought? Please write and tell me what you think of my poem, because I can't find the will to go on with it till I know your opinion. Do you think the Gazebo poem is up to the standard of the rest? I am rather fond of it myself; but isn't it unfeeling of me to speak of my poems and suchlike selfish themes at such a time? I love the darling photograph of the little sister; writing about other things makes me feel you will think me callous



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

about your great loss. What can I say to comfort you? think of me in comparative safety for the time, and indeed in time you will feel young and happy again, you who are to me the great example of youth and happiness. You must not say you have lost nerve and confidence, because you have not—and I trust you absolutely in everything. What a perfect time we will have together when I get home, please write and tell me you are happier, you who are so young and so lovely, I can't bear to think of your feeling otherwise. As I sit here and think of you I remember the West Down days, when you were the only woman I cared to look at, or sit beside. To go to Toriani's with you, and to see Lewis Waller act seems now to me to be quite as delightful as it did then, I cannot be happy if I think of you as ill or sorrowful. You have all the resiliency of youth, and always will have, and your love for me means more than the whole of the rest of the world, and always will. If you can, write and say you are happy or at least happier? You have had so hard a time since the War started, I often think what life must be for you, but your children all love you so deeply.

I got a good letter from Christopher lately. He seems very cheerful. I am in a great state of excitement as to what Mr. Blackwell thinks of my stuff. The Company is now commanded by a very nice fellow called Sloane Stanley. Constable is also here, which I am very glad of. I believe I shall be quite angry if nobody likes my poems! I feel rather like saying, '*You are my parrot, and you shall eat brown bread.*' How I am longing to



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

hear you imitate the —— family arguing about who did or who didn't shut the gate. I hope Grandmamma and dear Cousin Pamela Preston are well."

*July 16th.*

"... I recollect being dissatisfied with the sestet of my sonnet, so send it back to me please, I sent you the only copy I have. I wrote it off curiously quickly, the whole thing slap off half an hour before I sent it to you, I only remember being dissatisfied with some of the lines, so must have it again. Thank you so much for all the trouble you are taking for me about the 'litel boke' ... whose proofs are I trust progressing? This is just a love-line to tell you I am well and happy.

I send you a new poem written a few minutes ago, and swiftly polished up and finished. I can't help thinking it is rather good; I hope you will think so too? if you do it shall be included in the 'litel boke.' I am rather anxious to have a stiff cardboard cover—blue with a white piece of linen to keep it together. What do you think about it?

'I long to write a book that may  
Amuse those coming after,  
And may it be less grave than gay  
Less full of tears than laughter.'

Thank you so much for all this trouble you are taking for me; and tell me what you think of the new poem. My confidence in you is absolute."







“ And when that he was slain in this manner  
His lighte ghost full blissfully it went  
Up to the hollowness of the seventh sphere  
In converse letting every element.  
And there he saw with full avysement,  
The erratic starres hearkening harmony,  
With soundes full of heavenish melody.

And down from thennys fast he gan avyse  
This litel spot of Earth that with the Sea  
Embracèd is, and fully gan despise  
This wretched world, and held all vanity  
To respect of the plain felicity  
That is in Heaven above ; and at the laste,  
There he was slayn, his looking down he caste ;


And in himself he laughed right at the woe  
Of them that wepten for his death so faste  
And 'demnèd all our work that followeth so  
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,  
And shoulden all our hearte on Heaven caste.  
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle  
There as Mercury sorted him to dwelle.”

CHAUCER



## CHAPTER XIX

*June 18th, 1916.*

“ HANK you so much for your letter which I loved; I hoped so much that you would remember to criticise my poems. I will try and correct my D's . . . D D D these are all right are they? My former D was rather slack I know—and looked like Lord Frederick Very Soft, who drifted through life with his mouth restfully open.”

“ . . . Of course things look rosier to a casual observer posted in the Curzon Hotel than they do to a ditto, ditto, walking down the streets of this place which once had a population of 18 or 20,000 people, and now has not a soul. I live off Rue l'Ammonier which means either a hermit or an almond tree. An equally nutty thing to be.

Last night before I came up here was the last night of 'the Fancies.' I sang four songs, and took the part of Harry Tate's boy's friend in the sketch 'Motoring.' After the show we had a great supper on the stage. This was an idea of mine, and was a huge success. The officers did the serving, and the men were only allowed to sit and eat and drink. Lomas\* made a great success of cooking the soup and other things, and worked hard. He

\* Bim's servant.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

and the others thoroughly enjoyed the dinner. I haven't seen Lomas so happy for some time. It was rather a bore we had to go away that evening and come up here at 11.45, about 9 miles. . . .

I do hope you are better? I think of you continually, and love you more than the whole world put together. May we soon all be together in Peace."

23rd.

" . . . Just a love-line to catch the post; I was jubilant at getting your letter, and your praise. It is splendid of you to help to get all my old stuff together. I won't include the 'Smith' poem. I want to confine the slender volume to 'straight' stuff. I will polish off the Nightingale. I am longing to come home and comfort you. I might get home the first week in July, but don't know. You used to say my handwriting was like a bonfire in a wind—such a hurry you must excuse a bonfire in a typhoon to-night.

P.S.—A little healthy illness now that would mean a few weeks in England would do me all the good in the world—but I feel as well and strong as ever. There is such a nice kitten here with her mother, we have great games; my hands are covered with scratches as a result. Did I tell you what a dear letter I had from Nannie? She said she went into your room when you were asleep and that you always look more beautiful than ever asleep. It was a very finely expressed and worded letter. Nannie, she's a most splendid person, and how she loves all of us, doesn't she? God bless you and good-bye."





*Edward Wyndham Tennant.*  
1916.







*27 June.*

" . . . I came down from . . . two night's ago at about 11 p.m. in the middle of a terrific bombardment by our guns. As we went through between the batteries (we were in a lorry) it was a most impressive sight. A deafening noise going on all round, the sky lit up afresh every second by the great flashes of the big guns, and then it was as though four little red suns were created for a fraction of a second to disappear again at once. . . . This is what a battery of smaller guns look like in action in the dark.

Yesterday I tiff-tiffed over to a place 10 or 15 miles away, and took part in an open-air performance. You know how difficult it is to sing in the open air? however the audience was very good. After dinner (to which the M.G.C. officers entertained us all) there was another sing-song, whereat most of the company being Scotch, a considerable amount of that 'beverage' was consumed. I sang five or six times, and enjoyed the evening, but when it was time to go away as I thought, they wouldn't hear of it. There is a certain sort of rather buffy hospitality which cannot bear to see its guests depart; it must be 'one more song,' or 'one more drink' till one almost drops with fatigue. However I escaped at 12.30. It was pelting with rain, I borrowed a mackintosh and a torch (my machine had no lamp), and set out. Got back at five minutes to 4, and was very glad to get into my Jaeger bag. I am now well within doors and feeling content and happy. Only



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

2 or 3 more Nightingale verses to finish it. Very much love, devoted Bim."

1st July, 1916.

"... I loved getting your birthday letter, and the book, I like it immensely.

I am very happy, my birthday is such a lovely day, and I have no troubles.

I hear the French have taken back some forts at Verdun, which is very good. I am so glad my letters are a comfort to you. I will keep up a constant flow of them.

I am dining with Lawrence Straker to-night; do you remember him? He plays the piano well. He is in the Irish Guards.

What a good book 'Julius Le Vallon' is. I like the name. I should like to meet Algernon Blackwood, he must be interesting.

Tell me—do you really think my poems are worth publishing? It is because you think them good, and not because you are my Mother that you like them, isn't it? Sometimes I think that if I live I shall be a poet one day. Not by looking at what I have done, but because of feeling what I may do; of thinking of all that I could do. I know my poetry is not complex and impressionistic enough to suit the modern style of criticism.

Well, the sooner my proofs get to Mr. Blackwell the better shall I be pleased. I like the verse about the clouds—'like fishes in a pond'—don't you? and the line 'the cockle shells that sail at Love's behest.'

My love to all."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*4th July.*

" . . . I had a very jolly week back at camp, and tore about on a tiff-tiff and sang at Concerts, and dined with friends and enjoyed myself thoroughly. I had a letter from Laura for my birthday. She leaves for Nigeria on the 19th. Do try and see them before they sail. Little Laura is very happy evidently, I am so glad. And Guy Westmacott, I see, is going to marry. He is such a dear. I am so glad you are seeing Osbert, he is my dearest friend. When I dined with Straker the other day I saw Alfred Yorke who is Uncle Charlie Adeane's first cousin. He is a very charming man with a great sense of humour.

I loved Stephen's little letter for my birthday. I hope you are beginning to feel a little happier now? I long to see you and talk about all our dear old 'zokes.' . . . May I see you soon I pray."

*6th July.*

" . . . Not much news for you I fear except that I am well and happy. Last night I dined with Lionel Tennyson, and we had a very pleasant 'swarry.' Leslie Butler who used to command the Irish Guards has got the Brigade now, and he is a most charming General, being quite young and awfully nice and friendly. Just now when I was sitting writing outside this dug-out five of our aeroplanes went over the Boche lines in a bevy, and came back unhurt 15 minutes later, but in a halo of little bursts of shrapnel, grey and white with little pin-pricks of flame as they burst.

I read my Keats, and the Border Ballads; these are



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

both very good friends. The legends of women having 'bee-bahs' by fairies is a very interesting theme. It's rather cleverly treated by Arthur Machen in his very odd book 'The House of Souls.' Have you read this book? He is one of the few authorities on Witchcraft. The ballad about the Jew's daughter is splendid. I remember you reading us Hugh of Lincoln's story in Chaucer long ago; there is a variant of the tale among the ballads, as no doubt you know.

After the War you must teach me the guitar, for one could make up such good tunes for these ballads. I long to be able to sing 'Repêtes-moi qu'elle a pleuré,' and all your lovely songs. Do please keep them up for me—because I love hearing you sing so much. I want to learn all your guitar songs. No one else knows any of yours. . . .

Ever devoted Son."

*7th July.*

"... How are the proofs of the 'litel boke' progressing? Yesterday I climbed up to a peak or 'pinnacle of the Temple' and watched the German shells landing at regular intervals among some houses several hundred yards away. I could hear the sound of falling tiles and masonry, while the black smoke of the shells hung about the shattered street like a choking veil. When I see the pigeons here I think of your doves—Crooden and Pink-Footed Patterson of loved memory. . . . I hope I shall get a letter from you to-night. I trust you will like my new sonnet. . . ."



14<sup>th</sup> July.

“ . . . Just a short love-line to tell you I am well and happy. I went again to Calais on a motor-bicycle where I met 2 Captains in the Scots Guards. I lunched with the Duchess at her Hospital. Monica Grenfell was there too. The Duchess is very lovely ; I suppose it is rather boring for her to be there, for she seems to be very glad to see people. The two Scots Guards, Jack Stirling and Johnny Lumsden, lunched there the same day. Both very nice, especially Jack Stirling.

If you are in London and hear of any good songs will you please send them out to me? I am singing at a concert to-day. I hear from Christopher from time to time. What news of Madeline Adeane? . . . ”

July 21.

“ . . . The weather here is perfect, I have just finished reading last week's ‘Literary Supplement.’ I have my Oxford Book of Verse and I enjoyed re-reading Harry Cust's poem to you *Non Nobis*.

I tried fishing in the Canal this morning—you know my absolute faith in myself on these occasions?—(and I hope you have not forgotten how dear old Charles the family Crock spent a happy afternoon at the Loch with a rod and worm, neither wanting nor expecting to catch anything, but entirely content).

I've not heard from you for two days ; but there'll be a letter probably to-morrow. I started ‘The Angel in the House’ last night, and have read a quarter of it. Thank



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

you so much for sending me books. I have found some lovely lines in 'The Angel,' though the dozens of paragraphs it is divided into somewhat obscure the trend of the narrative.

What fun we will have when I come home. I am very happy, and Bernard and Layton and I are now sitting at a table by the canal writing letters, with a gramophone playing 'Rosy Rapture' which I love."

*July 24.*

"... Thank you so very much for sending 'The Ghosts of Piccadilly,' 'Pippa Passes,' and 'Christabel.' What a pleasant style Street has.

I loved the beautiful handkerchiefs that arrived at lunch time to-day; they are a glorious colour, and such lovely heavy silk.

We go up to the line at 10.15 to-night. We have spent 3 pleasant days here.

I went to a little Communion Service this morning, about 6 of us in the Chaplain's dug-out. It was so nice to see the clean white cloth and the candles. It is a splendid Service.

I sat up till 3.30 this morning talking about every sort of thing with Bernard Layton and Bernard Burke, who (although there is no intermediate one) I call 't'Otherest.'\* He is first-rate, 23 years old, and has a wife and a little boy.

I am longing for the proofs to come. I am so glad Constable is here to help me with them, as he has such

\* An allusion to the name in "Our Mutual Friend."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

good taste, and very often suggests alterations of a word or a comma that help considerably.

I am so glad you like my Julius Le Vallon poem (Re-incarnation). How I long to come home on leave. I am glad you are going to Weymouth again, but do beware of the smells that made David ill with diphtheria. What a 'scrunch' it gives me when I think of darling David, ill in your room when I had the jaundice—those days of anxiety! Thank God he is all right now.

How did you find dear Grandmamma? Well, I hope, and not inclined to say 'Poor. . . . *Everything*.'

I had such a success with—'awfæ like Mrs. Wishart'—story the other day.\* I hope Daddy is cheerful about things.

BIM."

*July 25th.*

" . . . We came into these trenches again last night at 11.15 p.m., and Constable and I walked about and directed work till daylight. At about 6 (after breakfast) I had a very pleasant 'sneeping-party' till about 10.45, when the C.O. came round. He was extremely pleasant. After he had been gone under an hour they shelled us a bit and treated us to an unpleasant device known as a 'minnewerfer,' and called a Minny for short. These are enormous trench mortars which shoot a missile about twice the size of a magnum of champagne, and

\* This is a story of an unexpected comment upon the exquisite art of Madame Pavlova. She was dancing before, as always, a packed house, the spectators enthralled by her consummate grace. And then a voice was heard saying, in a strong Fife accent: "Awfæ like Mrs. Wishart."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

make a fearful row when they land. Their only good point is that you can see them coming all the way (with luck), and so it is becoming quite a game. They don't shoot well with them, and we always turn on our heavy guns when they start, so they don't send over many. But it is an exciting moment when this clumsy thing soars into the air, seeming to halt at its zenith, before it comes down. It does not require much judgment to avoid them. I've just had a pleasant wash and shave in the trench, while Lomas kept a good look out for Minnies, and I feel very much refreshed. The post has not come in yet. I hope there will be a letter from you. We had a corporal wounded by a rifle grenade this morning; that is a bomb fired out of the muzzle of a rifle, which makes it go further. He was hit in the ankle and fore-arm, and was simply jubilant. The other chaps envied him a good deal, and so did I. He will probably go straight for England. There is no news except that I am well and happy and longing to see you.

Ever devoted Son."







“ You may observe that nothing so much resembles death as sleep ; and the soul in sleep, above all other times, gives proofs of its divine nature ; for when free, and disengaged from the immediate service of the body, it has frequently a foresight of things to come, from whence we may more clearly conceive what will be its state when entirely freed from this bodily prison.”

CYRUS in his *Cyropædia*, Book 8.



## CHAPTER XX

*"Death," wrote Robert Browning, "it is this harping on death I despise so much. Why, my friend, you know as well as I that death is life. . . . Never say of me that I am dead."*



It will have been seen that Bim read a good deal during these summer months. Among his books when they were returned was the copy in which he had read so often of the Oxford book of English Verse, most stained and war-worn. According to his custom some particular poems were marked by him, the numbers of which are 590, 591, and 578, 697, and 876 in this collection. These poems shall not be given here, but anyone caring sufficiently to look them out, will be aware how all too plainly some of them tell of farewell and longing; an undercurrent of his feelings of which all expression in his letters his cheerful courage effectually masked.

The other volumes are Keats' poems, the "Border Ballads," "Men and Portraits" by Stevenson, "The Rubáiyát," poems by Leigh Hunt, a volume by Walter Savage Landor, "The Angel in the House," his Daily Service book (given him by his God-father, Bertram Talbot), "Pippa Passes," the poems by S. T. Coleridge, a small



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

volume containing excerpts from the writings of Charles Dickens, "Pendennis," Shakespeare's Henry IV and V, and the "Golden Treasury." In the fly-leaf of his copy of this collection are written the lines :

"Go, little book, and take thy golden store  
Where battle rages, and the cannon roar,  
And bring the soldier, should he leisure find,  
Some sip of solace to his heart and mind."

There is also the book to whose pages he had committed the rough notes of his diary, and a volume in which were his poems in manuscript, scraps of verse, beginnings of plays, attempts in various metre, and fragmentary essays in prose. There is the commencement, which he evidently had cast aside, of another version of the exquisite dedication of his poem to his Mother. In this he makes allusion to the Wicket Gate of Christian's journeying, quoting from the book read so often by Bim in childhood, and never forgotten.

In the fly-leaf of this manuscript book are the following light-hearted lines. These are so like Bim in the pelt and freshness of their gaiety that they almost conjure up his living presence as you read them. More especially do the last four lines, in the light touch of their sudden turn to something deeper, image his personality, at once bright and tender as the aspect of an April landscape seen through sun-lit rain.

"This simple tome unveils the soul  
Of *quidam puer* Bimbo,  
With kindly favour scan the scroll  
Nor wish the lad in Limbo.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

I call it scroll for rhyming's sake,  
'Tis incorrect, I know it—  
For what it's worth the contents take  
Nor harshly murmur 'Stow it.'  
Fair Truth in déshabille to chase  
Would not be really gallant,  
Kind reader, pray give up the race,  
Relying on my talent.  
I long to write a book that may  
Amuse those coming after,  
And may it be less grave than gay  
Less full of tears than laughter."

GRAND HOTEL DU RHIN, AMIENS,

*August 4, 1916.*

"... Here I am at Amiens, with toothache, which is a bore; but well made up for by the comfort of a bed and good food. I have four teeth to be seen to and will have to go back before they are half done, but this can't be helped. I arrived here last night about ten, having tried lots of other hotels first which were all full. They could not give me a dinner so I dined off half a melon, six éclairs, and a bit of bread and water, which made a delightful meal.

This morning I went for my appointment at 9.50, which Lomas had gone out early to arrange for me. The dentist put in a wad of wool to stop it aching and I'm to go back at three. It's now about eleven. I have been to the coiffeur, and I have bought two songs: '*Au bord de la rivière*' and '*Chanson de l'Adieu*.' I could not get '*L'Esclave*.'

This is a lovely town, the biggest I've seen in France,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

after Paris. There are a good many English here, though I don't know what they do.

I expect I shall go back to the Battalion to-morrow night and come back here, perhaps, in ten days' time to get the dentist's job finished. He is a New Zealander, and seemed capable. 'Nozzen' to say, so must stop writing; write to me, please, darling Moth', and God bless you. They say 'leave' will start soon again.

I feel so sorry Monsignor Drew's Mother has died—but what a wonderful age to have attained!

Devoted son,  
BIM."

Aug. 7, 1916.

"... I returned from ... yesterday morning, having been compelled to pass the night *en route*, as I could not get a lift. However a very nice officer, who I woke up at midnight, lent me a pair of pyjamas, and half his double bed, which was really very good of him.

I enjoyed myself enormously at ... and feel well rested by the two days' rest and comfort, and I have no toothache now, though I must return there in a fortnight to have one treated finally. I brought the C.O. back a large lobster, which pleased him.

The billets we are now in are quite comfortable, but there are a good many fleas in the room I sleep in. Do you like the inside of my envelopes? they are called 'Grands Écossais' on the lid!

Now I must go and pay the men."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*Aug. 11, 1916.*

“ . . . Thank you so much for the parcel of books which came this morning ; what beautiful little books they are. Thank you more than I can say. I have been correcting my proofs to-day with Constable, who is a great help to me, in minor words, and punctuation.

Yesterday Copper, and a lot of other swells were going for a joy-ride into A—— but they couldn't go after all ; and Copper, rather kindly, didn't cancel the car, but sent six of us off in it. Constable and I went from this Company. We had great fun. I was feeling very ill, being feverish and wretched, but a steaming-hot big bath and good food, and not much walking, and the nice motor drive must have cured me, for this morning, except for certain internal disturbance, I am all right. I was in hot and cold sweats yesterday alternately, but kept well wrapped up, which probably kept me secure.

It is pretty comfortable here, though we have to sleep in cellars. The town is not much smashed, but all the people have left.

I long to come home ; plans for the future seem very vague. God bless you.

Ever devoted BIM.”

*12 August.*

“ . . . I was very happy at getting three letters from you to-day. One contained Stephen's very precious letter. I had a nice letter from Sir Edward the other day. As to my poems I have finished revising them now—I am glad you like the ‘ Knight ’ ballad,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Now I am so sleepy, not well yet, I must go to sleep in this chair for a bit. Give my love to Daddy and tell him how much I think of him to-day, on which we have had such fun together."

*Sunday, 15th August, 1916.*

" . . . I dined with Eric Greer last night, we talked about Whitsuntide at Wilsford and what fun it was. He spoke very affectionately of David. I have just come back from Church; there was a Bishop preaching—he was quite good, very blunt and simple. I saw Guy Baring this morning. He is always so nice to me.

I loved David's letter: the new names are splendid. I am wondering if you have written to the 'Westminster' for my poem 'In Memoriam'?"

*Aug. 18, 1916.*

" . . . I shall like to have some of my 'pomes' in the Anthology Osbert and his sister are bringing out,—is it all right to send some of those that are to appear in my little book? About the dedication, I want to dedicate it to you and Uncle George—and will send it as soon as I have framed it in suitable words.

I shall find some other sort of hound instead of Basset; I am altering 'cony-track' to 'lapin-track' which, though Frenchified, is a distinct tongue-joy.

I have been revelling in the books you sent me, especially 'Christabel.' I like 'The Angel in the House' enormously; I have read much of it twice. It is delightful. I had forgotten that 'Christabel' ends so inconclusively. I am reading 'Maud' now. I read



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Omar at one sitting, and again and again. I love it. It is also (like 'Hamlet') 'full of quotations,' which I am glad to place.

Who is with Stephen now? is he being prepared, as much as is possible, for West Downs?

Now, all my love is with you. Goodbye."

*20th August, 1916.*

"I have written my little dedicatory verse for Worple Flit—for you and Uncle George, who have been my chief helpers in the flesh and in the spirit.

I am writing with my left hand now, as my right elbow is on the ground. I am lying on a blanket in a delightful field surrounded by tall poplars which I always remember as being Grandmamma's favourite tree. There is a high bank with trees on it, just on the side from which the wind is blowing.

I finished yesterday 'Experiences of an Irish R.M.,' every page of which I enjoyed. Irish humour is splendid; and Irish life is here delightfully portrayed; but I failed to find the funny bit which was given in the 'Broad Sheets.' To-day I have read a very readable book called 'The Right Stuff,' a good novel by Ian Hay, which I read at Winchester years ago. I have not the energy, or why is it? but I don't lay hold on the poem 'Maud.' I shall love 'The Scholar Gypsy,' I read it in Mr. Blore's English Div. 'Shy Traffickers the dark Iberians come,' with their delightful cargoes 'steeped in brine'; and the last line lingers in my memory: 'and on the beach undid his corded bales.'



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Aug. 21, 1916.

[*To his Father.*]

" . . . I was delighted to hear from you to-day. The weather here is glorious, and we are well behind ; plans seem to chop and change a good deal, and I am uncertain of the immediate future. I fear there is no chance of leave till all offensives ' close down ' for the winter, and when that will be God only knows. However, even if I don't manage to get home for the 31st, you will all know who and of what I am thinking, on that day, and the two next as well, for that matter.

I hope you have good sport. Is the Laird of Traquair still going strong? Mummie sent me a capital photograph of you both ; your white suit looks awfully smart ; I send you a rather nice early-Victorian history of Napoleon. I like the pictures so much, but I daresay it is quite worthless.

I am tingling with excitement to know what people think of my poems. I hope they won't be too much slanged, though to be killed by reviewers, like Keats, would not be held to be a patriotic death in these days.

Ever your devoted son."

[*To his Mother.*]

Aug. 21st.

" . . . Thank you so much for your letter. Some day I must show you a photograph of Ninette. She lives with her rather dull Aunt and Uncle and an elder sister ; we have moved far from her whereabouts now, though we shall probably return soon ; she is very pretty, and well dressed, and can't talk any English. She is back with her



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

parents in Paris for a bit now, but she lives mostly with the Aunt and Uncle. ‘*Nouvelles de Ninette.*’ The news is very good, but I do wish you would tell me what the High Brows think? The P.M. and sic-like. . . .”

Aug. 23.

“ . . . I suppose you are still at Glen. I wish I could be there for the 31st. Talking of the hills, do you remember that day long ago, when a nursery-party—we were all descending Minchmuir, and you thought I would be cold, and wrapped me in your rose-coloured lovely petticoat? I love to think of those days; and another time, in later years, when Zelle was balanced shriekingly, on the broad back of a hill pony, which was subsiding into a bog with her. Those were the days when David used to ride Little Diamond; I hope you haven’t forgotten how he and the groom were observed coming across the golf course, *ventre à terre*, closely pursued by a—wasp. What fun we all had then! The days when Clare, Christopher, and I used to ride to Mr. Mackintosh’s school in the village in grey bowler hats, with each our ‘piece’ in our pocket. I have just thought of your imitation of the . . . rendering of ‘Young Lochinvar’; which train of thought leads me to: ‘the mother of the silkworm is always a moth.’\* ”

Do you remember when we were at Kirk House (Kirket) and you were sitting at your writing-table in the ‘tippits for mice’ drawing-room, when a grim

\* See Appendix II.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

procession passed the window headed by me, followed by Clare, one of the maids, two of the gardeners, Christopher, and finally Willson with a ladder, the whole thing explained by the fact that Mdle. Kremser, the French governess, had climbed a tree and was totally unable to get down unaided? Then the games of cricket with a rubber ball when Jack Pease was unanimously received into the 'uncledom.'

We had a splendid house in a tree behind Willie Houston's house (where those little apples used to fall from the tree, and be so delightedly gathered and eaten)—years came and went and Willie Houston's relays of dogs were invariably called 'Nellie' quite regardless of sex: 'Aye, I just ca' him Nellie.' What a perfect troll he was!—God rest his soul. I think our family has many more good jokes than any other, don't you?

Now endless love from your devoted son,

BIM.

P.S.—I hope my proofs will come soon. I daresay if I wore black shirts, and painted execrable futurist pictures, and wrote verse that was quite incomprehensible, the reviewers would take it for genuine 'poesie.'"

27 August, 1916.

"... We have been moving, so forgive my not having written for four days, and now we have at last settled. The rain never ceases for very long. I sleep in a tent with Constable and Thompson (of Nairobi), it leaks; which is, however, quite all right. I have just finished correcting my proofs.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

My new Company Commander is called Mike Mitchell and is very nice. About thirty or thirty-four, married, and he laughs at my jokes. He also has read and loves 'Over Bemerton's.'

Nothing much is happening here, but there is no leave.

There is a good Y.M.C.A. Hut here, and we shall have a concert soon, I hope.

I heard from Mr. Blore and from Mr. Helbert a couple of days ago. I wish I had some news. As to the book I should like blue with gold lettering. Now I must cease writing. With Endless Love,

BIM."

30 August, 1916.

"... There is terribly depressing weather here, thunderstorms, and sheets of rain, and hurricanes of wind. We are very busy, dashing about in the most absurd and seemingly unnecessary manner. All the more boring to me as I am still rather poorly. I long to be home more than ever. It is now 8 a.m. I shall get more cheerful as the day wears on. I would give the last ten years of my life for six months' rest now. We are having a concert to-morrow. My love, and don't be anxious about me."



“ ‘ Viens,’ me dira Jésus,  
‘ Viens, parmi mes élus,  
Viens, O Lys immortel !  
Viens refleurir au ciel.’ ”



## CHAPTER XXI

2 Sept., 1916.

“



LOVED getting your lovely long letter to-day, especially as I am poorly and have been in bed all the afternoon. I was inoculated last night and we had an 8 a.m. 12 noon morning to-day which did me up and gave me a splitting headache. I got up and picked a bit of soup omelette, and grapes, and am now just writing this before I go to bed. It is 8.40 p.m. Please God I shall be all right to-morrow; I feel rather ill just now.

I got a lovely batch of letters to-day: two from you; one about the dedication which I am so glad you like, and one from Daddy, praising the dedication. I am very proud of his praise, it is always so real. We are still in uncomfortable billets but the rain has stopped, and so my tent is dry.

I shall be all right to-morrow. I'll write and tell you anyway. . . .”

4th September.

“ . . . Excuse this scrawl as I am writing in bed. I feel better than when I wrote last, but I am still poorly. It is about 3 p.m. My temperature at midday was 100 p. 7, so I shall stay in bed to-day. It is im-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

possible to keep the tent cool, and it is unwise to sit outside for fear of a chill. Parry, who used to coach me in Mathematics at Winchester, has just been in to see me. He is a captain in the Rifle Brigade, and I like him very much.

Did I tell you that I organized quite a successful concert at an hour's notice on Wednesday? it was great fun. I loved your long letters; I do hope to hear from Christopher soon; how I long to see him again.

They are going to do their best to finish the War this year, from all one hears. I pray we may.

My love is with you."

*Sept. 7th, 1916.*

"... We are expecting to leave this place to-day and go off somewhere to make a road; but we have just got the message to 'stand-by,' that is, wait in readiness, so whether we go or not, we don't know. The news is universally good, the Brigadier said two days ago—the 5th September—was the most successful day of the war, so everyone is very bucked at the outlook. If there is an attack the C.O. has ordered me to be at Battalion Head-quarters, helping him and the Adjutant. This can lessen your anxiety considerably, darling Moth'; we are just going to march off after all, so good-bye—from Devoted Son."

*8th September, 1916.*

"... I received your wire last night, but as I have been feeling perfectly well for several days, I took no



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

action about it. You must not be anxious like this, because if I had been the least ill they would have sent me to Hospital. As it was, I was very much better next day, as I think I wrote to you. It is unfortunately impossible to be given sick leave out here ; I promise you that, now, I am absolutely all right.

We left our billets yesterday morning at 8 a.m. in motor lorries, and came up here about seven miles. We are bivouacked here on a slope, with old trenches all round, and our old original trench is 500 yards in front of us. I walked right across all the old trenches last night, and again this morning. Last night Mitchell and I were on a five-hour fatigue, repairing a road about three miles away to our front. We worked till dark, being rather hampered by a constant stream of men, waggons, and horses which cut up the road as fast as we mended it. However, we did good work. The whole place up there is littered with rifles, ammunition, clothing, wire, shells, and every sort of stuff. At one point the road had been previously repaired, and instead of rows of staples put across and covered with mud, they had used rifles. Just think of the waste. We were shelled a bit as we prepared to move off about 8.30 p.m., and though only about three shells came, all were uncomfortably close. I am thankful to say that only one man was slightly wounded and we got back here with no further trouble.

Directly we got in last night (about 10.15) we, that is Mitchell and I, had dinner and went to bed in a ' bivvy ' made of coloured canvas and sticks, in which the other



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

three were also in bed. The C.O. then sent round to say that he wanted me to go up and inspect the work done, at 6.20 this morning. I rose at 5.40 and went up to last night's place with him, only we went much further. It was awfully interesting, and I would not have missed it, though it is horribly grisly in places. The wastage of material all the way is something terrific. I saw a lot of machine-gun magazines lying about, still wrapped up in brown paper, as they came from the makers. We got back to breakfast, and I have seized about four hours' sleep through the day since.

There are big guns all round us as I write, but none near enough to be unpleasant, as they were at Vermelles last year. We have nothing to do here, and it is quite fine, though wind-swept. I now hear that we shall probably take over the most newly won line to-morrow night, which will probably not be a very quiet locality. However, I trust implicitly in God, and am in very high spirits. '*And as well*' (as Christopher used to say when he was a little boy) it is time we did something, as we have been very inactive for a long time.

As to my poems I am not sure I want a copy sent to the 'Peeblesshire Advertiser' as what there is about home in the 'pomes' happens to be about Wilsford.

Now I must stop. My eternal love to you ; I think of you every moment, and love you more than I can say. I hope there may be leave when we go into a quieter part of the line. . . ."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

9th Sept., 1916.

" . . . I hope that when you get this we shall have had our little show ; and I shall still be all right. There is nothing to say except that I am in capital spirits, and thinking of you very much."

Sept. 11th, 1916.

" . . . Up to now I am safe and well ; but we have had a fairly uncomfortable time, though we have been lucky on the whole. Poor Thompson (in my Company) was killed yesterday. I shall miss him so, he was such a charming fellow. We have been heavily shelled everywhere of the line.

We had very good luck getting up here, having hardly any casualties in the whole Battalion. I was flying up and down the batt. with messages to different people from the Commanding Officer all the time, it was quite a busy time for me ; but since then, apart from helping to write messages, and being generally useful and cheerful, it's been less strenuous. I keep my 'Oxford Book of English Verse' with me.

I received your poem of 'Hester' the day before yesterday ; just a few hours before marching off to come here. I can't tell you what a high level I think it reaches. It is the finest thing you have done for years.\* My darling Moth', how can I write all I feel when I think of your great hopes, and your deeply wounded heart ? your hopes, which gave you such profound happiness are dashed ; but turn your thoughts to collecting your

\* The poem "Hester" is given in the Appendix III.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

poems written since publishing 'Windlestraw.' You have written dozens of splendid ones that you take no heed of; and you are already in a good niche among modern poets, so please! see about collecting these soon. I lent 'Hester,' before we marched off, to Constable (as he was one of those chosen to stay behind this time). He is such a good critic, and has spoken to me about your books, notably 'The White Wallet,' which he doesn't think was worthily published. I agree.

We hope to be relieved to-morrow morning."

*12 September, 1916.*

"... We were safely relieved last night and are now going back for a day or two. We have had all the kicks and none of the ha'pence in this show, as other batts. had the fun of repulsing attacks and killing hundreds, while we had to just sit and be shelled. No doubt we shall have a better chance soon. The C.O. is very envious of what he calls the 'other chaps' hellish good shoot.'

We are delighted to be out, and should be in comfortable quarters by midnight to-night. I have not changed my clothes yet, so shall be glad.

I forgot to tell you that I was developing an abscess in a back molar on the morning of the day we went into action. So I forthwith mounted a prehistoric bicycle, rode eight miles in sweltering heat, had gas and tooth out in a brace of shakes, and rode back, getting one or two lifts in lorries. It was 'a 'uge toof' and well out of the way. Devoted BIM."



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

14 *September*, 1916.

“ . . . We came here at 1.30 a.m. yesterday morning, and after a heavy meal I slept till 11 a.m. I feel none the worse for the unpleasant three days and feel more than ready to go in again to-night, which we shall do. Imagine my surprise when who should step into my tent yesterday but Adrian. I was delighted to see him, and he lunched with me and I had tea with him. Do send me photographs of you all ; and that one of dear Christopher, looking very grown-up and bronzed, in white ducks. I am longing to see you. God grant it may be soon. I will write to you whenever I get the chance, but no one knows what may happen in the next day or two. I pray I may be all right, but in any case ‘ Where is Death’s sting ? ’ ”

18th *September*.

“ . . . Thank Heaven I have come safely out of this battle after two days and two nights of it. It started properly at 5 a.m. 15th, and the artillery fire was terrific. We were in support and went up about 7.45 and sat down again further up just the right side of the German barrage. Then I was sent across to the — Guards to go with them, find out where they proposed going, and lead the Battalion up beside it. Off I went, and joined the — Guards, and went forward with them. When we had skirted G, the further of the two G’s, and were going through a little dip in the ground, we were shot at by Boches on the high ground with rifles, there must have been about twenty shooting at us. I was



walking in front with their C.O. and Adjutant, and felt sufficiently uncomfortable, but didn't show it. Bullets scuffed up dust all around with a wicked little 'zump,' but they were nearly all short and none of us, at least who were in front, were hit. Thus we went on, and they took up their position between two of these huge steel tanks on the near side of the ridge. Then they lent me an orderly, and I started back to bring the Battalion along; it was an unpleasant journey of about half a mile over nothing but shell-holes full of dead and dying, with any amount of shells flying about. Several whizz-bangs landed very close to me, but I got back to the Battalion and explained the position to them, and then we all went down there and took up a position on the right of the . . . The C.O., the Adjutant, the Doctor, and I spent that afternoon, evening, and night in a large rocky shell-hole. We were severely shelled on and off the whole time, and about four men were done in in the very next shell-hole a couple of yards away. That night was one of the coldest and most uncomfortable it has ever been my fortune to spend—'with the stars to see.' Meanwhile most of the Battalion had gone up to support the —— and —— Brigade, who had done the attack at five that morning, and had lost heavily. At seven or eight next morning we moved our Batt. head-quarters to the line of trenches in front which had been dug the night before. This was safer than our shell-hole, and as we had the worst shelling I have ever experienced during that afternoon and evening, it was probably a very wise move.



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

An attack took place at 1.15 p.m. that day, and I will tell you more about it when I see you, D.V. My worst job was that of taking messages down the line of trenches to different captains. The trenches were full of men, so I had to go over the open. Several people who were in the trench say they expected every shell to blow me to bits. That night we were again shelled till about 8 p.m. and were relieved about midnight. We got in about 2.30. I was dog-tired, and Churchill, who now commands No. 4 Company, was even more tired. Soup, meat, champagne, and cake, and I went to bed till about 2 p.m. That is the time one really does want champagne, when one comes in at 3 a.m. after no sleep for fifty hours. It gives one the strength to undress.

Now the great question is will leave start soon? They say it will. I wish my poems could come out soon. The lighter blue cover is sure to be charming. If there is any question of a photy in the papers please try and get my Sargent drawing in and not my other photographs, as most of them are bad. I loved the photograph of Christopher and I send you back his letters, which are as good as ever. I'm so glad he's been ashore.

Darling Moth', I am so thankful to be alive; I suppose you have heard who are dead? Guy Baring, Raymond Asquith, Sloper Mackenzie, and many others. It is a terrible list. Poor Olive will be heart-broken—and so will Katherine. Death and decomposition strew the ground. . . . I must tell you of other things.

I made a very pleasant discovery the other day. I had occasion to walk a few hundred yards with Corporal Jukes,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

one day, and he told me that his father was keeper at Clouds, and he remembers your wedding, and has a photy of it at home. He knows Willson as 'Ernie,' and remembers when Icke was footman! He is *such* a charming man. What is more, he has a sister, Polly Jukes (such a nice name), who was housemaid to Glen—Grandpapa at Glen, so he is altogether a great family friend. I was so glad he introduced himself. We had a very good talk about people like Mr. Mallet, Mrs. Vine, and suchlike hench-folk. Do write and tell me if you remember him? He was butler to some general in Cairo before the War, and is forty-one years old, very young-looking, and a perfect man. . . ."

20th September, 1916.

" . . . To-night we go up to the last trenches we were in, and to-morrow we go over the top. Our Brigade has suffered less than either of the other two Brigades in Friday's biff (15th), so we shall be in the forefront of the battle. I am full of hope and trust, and pray that I may be worthy of my fighting ancestors. The one I know best is Sir Henry Wyndham, whose bust is in the hall at 44 Belgrave Square, and there is a picture of him on the stairs at 34 Queen Anne's Gate. We shall probably attack over about 1200 yards, but we shall have such artillery support as will properly smash the Boche line we are going for. And even (which is unlikely) if the artillery doesn't come up to our hopes the spirit of the Brigade of Guards will carry all resistance before it. The pride of being in such a great regiment! The



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

thought that all the old men, 'late Grenadier Guards,' who sit in the London Clubs, are thinking and hoping about what we are doing here! I have never been prouder of anything, except your love for me, than I am of being a Grenadier. To-day is a great day for me. That line of Harry's rings through my mind, '*High heart, high speech, high deeds, 'mid honouring eyes.*' I went to a service on the side of a hill this morning, and took the Holy Communion afterwards, which always seems to help one along, doesn't it? I slept like a top last night, and dreamed that someone I know very well (but I can't remember who it was) came to me and told me how much I had grown. 'Three or four of my brother officers read my poems yesterday, and they all liked them very much which pleased me enormously. I feel rather like saying 'If it be possible let this cup pass from me,' but the triumphant finish 'nevertheless not what I will but what Thou willest,' steels my heart and sends me into this battle with a heart of triple bronze.

I always carry four photies of you when we go into action, one is in my pocket-book, two in that little leather book, and one round my neck, and I have kept my little medal of the Blessed Virgin. Your love for me and my love for you, have made my whole life one of the happiest there has ever been; Brutus' farewell to Cassius sounds in my heart: 'If not farewell; and if we meet again, we shall smile.' Now all my blessings go with you, and with all we love. God bless you, and give you peace.

Eternal Love,

from BIM."







“When danger was greatest his smile was loveliest.”

*From the letter of a private soldier.*



“ ‘ Out on thee, Death,’ Justice and Pity said,  
‘ Why take the young, and let the old go free ? ’  
‘ Religion is the worship of the dead,’  
Death answered, ‘ know ye not ? more foolish ye.  
How could Below look upward to Above  
Did not these die, whom Gods and Mothers love ? ’ ”

F. W. BAIN.



## CHAPTER XXII

*"That death whose truer name is  
Onward. . . ."*

TENNYSON.

On the 22nd September, 1916, Bim went on.

*[From his Commanding Officer.]*

*Sept. 24, 1916.*

" . . . We all loved him, and his loss is terrible. Please accept my deepest sympathy. His Company was holding a sap occupied by Germans and ourselves, a block separated the two. Bim was sniping when he was killed absolutely instantaneously by a German sniper. His body is buried in a cemetery near Guillemont. The grave is close to that of Raymond Asquith, and we are placing a Cross upon it and railing it round to-day. Forgive this scribble, we are still in action, and attack again to-morrow morning."

"Bim was such a gallant boy."

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY SEYMOUR,

Lt.-Col.,

4th Batt. Grenadier Guards."



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

September 30, 1916.

“ . . . What an answer to the prattlers who talk of ‘interest’ and ‘safe billets,’ and suchlike libels! He was a great-souled man, and like his two cousins, was in the ranks of the charging Infantry when he fell. And now I see that truly delicious poem ‘Green Gardens in Laventie’ in yesterday’s ‘Times.’ One of the most poetical things I have ever read.

I am so deeply sorry for you both—and also for the Regiment.

Such gifts are rare.

Yours in all sympathy,  
CAVAN.”

[*A brother officer wrote.*]

Sept. 30, 1916.

“ . . . Being the only officer left in your son’s company, barring Captain Churchill (wounded), I would like to send you a few lines to express to you my deepest sympathy in your terrible loss. I was with your son until the last engagement, and as I did not go up till the 24th he gave me a letter to post for him to you which I hope you have received. He was liked above everyone, especially among the men; I think there could be no greater tribute paid than what they wrote home about him; I see the letters having to censor them. Besides praising him, quite a number asked their relatives to send them his photograph from the Picture papers.

We are now resting for a few weeks, there are hardly any of us left who went in on the 15th. If there is any-



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

thing I can do for you I shall be only too pleased, if you will only let me know. With deepest sympathy which I am certain is shared by every man in the Company.

Yours sincerely,

F. SELBY LOWNDES.

2nd Lieut."

[*From the C.S.M.*]

" . . . On behalf of the N.C.O.'s and Men of the 4th Company, 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards, I write in memory of your Gallant Son. He was most popular, and deeply beloved by all ranks. His kind acts will always be held in remembrance.

I am, My Lord,

Yours obediently,

W. H. STRETON.

4th Batt. Gren. Guards."

[*Extract from the letter of a private soldier.*]

T. C. WARD,

STOBHILL, GLASGOW.

"DEAR MADAM,

I had the pleasure to serve under your son, and I may tell you it was a great blow to lose him . . . none could at first believe that it was true. Men talked together in hushed voices, just like children at the death of a father or mother. We have lost pals at times and felt sad about them, but with your son it was different. We felt we had not only lost an officer but a great and dear friend. He wasn't only an officer, he was a great



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

friend to all the men. No danger was too great for him to go into. . . . When things were at their worst he would pass up and down the trench cheering the men, and it was a treat to see his face always smiling. *When danger was greatest his smile was loveliest.* All was ready to go anywhere with him, although he was so young. All trusted him. And when we were at rest in billets it was just the same. Anything he could do to make us happy he did. Accept my sympathy for your dear son.

Private S. A., 24682."

[*From Bim's Platoon Sergeant.*]

" . . . Realising as we do our loss truly only enables us to appreciate in a slight measure yours: at all times his interest in us never wavered during fourteen months of exacting duties in France. We feel it is up to us to give you, Madam, a glimpse of his cheerful and cheering soldiering.

If a tired one showed signs of flagging or collapsing on the march, one never saw our officer strafe the weary: instead, your son would help, and shouldering rifle and pack himself, he carried on.

In the trenches no man received orders from your son which he would not have undertaken to carry out himself, and our confidence in him was never founded on fancy.

It is with the greatest sense of loss to ourselves that I voice the sincere sympathy of those remaining in the platoon of which your son was commander. . . .

T. J. BLYTH."



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

28 *September*, 1916.

“The Queen and I deeply regret the loss which has befallen you and Lady Glenconner by the death in battle of your eldest son; we offer you our true sympathy in your sorrow.

GEORGE R.I.”







## SOME LETTERS



“O glorious day ! when freed from this troublesome rout, this heap of confusion and corruption below, I shall repair to that divine Assembly, that heavenly congregation of souls ! and not only to those I have mentioned but also to my dear Cato, than whom a more vertuous soul was never born, nor did any exceed him in piety and affection.

His body I committed to the funeral pile, which he, alas ! ought to have lived to do by mine. Yet his soul did not forsake me, but keeping me still in view, removed to those Abodes, to which he knew I was in a little time to follow . . . and in this I have supported myself that I knew our parting was to be *neither far nor long*, and that the time is but short till we shall happily meet again.”

CICERO in *de Senectute*.




## CHAPTER XXIII

*"What is sacrifice? in reality it is not pain but joy. It is not really self-denial, but it is self-expression. You only think of sacrifice as pain because you look at it from the standpoint of the body. Look at it from the standpoint of the eternal spirit, and you know that his joy and delight is in pouring himself out, that it would be in self-repression that suffering would be found. You realise yourself, as you give yourself."*

A. B.

September, 1916.

" NEVER met so living a person as Bim ; it is almost impossible—and probably mistaken—to think of him as silent. It is difficult to say anything, but you know that I am sorry with you. Few people knew more about you and Bim, and you know that I remember things. Perhaps by telling you some of the things that I remember you will realise a little that I can understand.

I remember the first time I met him. It was in the hall at Wilsford. He had on the 'Buffalo' hat, with the blue bird's-eye handkerchief knotted round it. He didn't know who I was. There was a good deal of snow during the holidays. I rose in his estimation by bringing down a small bird with a rifle from one of the high beeches by the tennis-ground. We wrote a burlesque in rhyme. I recall vividly his eager collaboration, and his power of



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

intense enjoyment. The last day of the holidays we had tea in the Round House, and Bim entertained his village friends. He had a band of boys he used to drill, and lead in mimic raids, arming them with toy guns and pistols, and cardboard uniforms from Hamley's. These were all assembled eating from a trestle table, seated on the little chairs that furnish the Round House. You cooked rashers of bacon for them at the little stove, and Bim stepped about among the seated boys, serving them himself. He made a palisade of sticks, which made us sad I remember, because it remained after he had gone away to school.

When Easter came we went caravanning. 'Bimbo brings down a rook' appeared in large type in the local paper. He and Christopher and I went up to London to see 'an Englishman's Home.' That must have been the day about which a legend arose that Bim appeared quite ready to go up to London in one slipper and a football boot; but he knew how to prepare when Englishmen's homes were really in danger. Don't you remember that caravan tour? Bim was too lively to be with the caravan, but was for ever either far behind or far ahead. Your brother—and I think some others of the gallant dead—came out to meet us just before we got to Clouds. That was the day you told the story of 'The Angel and the Innkeeper' that you found somewhere in your memory—I believe Mr. Harold Cox had told it to you once at a dinner party—and so you got the children home over the last mile or two, before a deferred tea.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

We were at the West Downs sports that year. I never knew whether Bim was an A. or a B., but we were there at the sports, and Bim took lively part in them, and we heard much of A.'s and B.'s.

I remember getting up early to meet him at Romsey when the summer holidays came. He used to come back so tremendously full of life, with always, apparently, so much to occupy him. The time never hung heavily on his hands, he surely never spent a vacant hour. Very well indeed do I remember his going back to school after these holidays. 'Himself' and you and I went with Bim to the station. When we got back (to St. Ermin's Hotel, because you were altering your house at the time, building the Picture Gallery) you wept because you had parted from him, and you found a doll that squeaked when it was pressed, or beat a tambourine—he had bought it that morning. It made you sad, for you said when any one was young enough to buy such a toy he was not old enough to go away to school. I think you were right; but he was a child, in some ways, to the last great moment of his life. I think he went to war with a child's zest in a game, not with any melancholy fortitude, but with a child's joy. But he was no child in the way he carried it out. It was not a child who said to me in answer to a remark, 'Perhaps it is just as well she should think we are in reserve.'

Yet in doing a man's work, he kept so many characteristics of a child. He loved toys. The very last time I saw him he was in a state of hurry because he found his train to France went earlier than he had expected,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

and he had so many friends to whom to say good-bye.

It is because I remember so much about you and him that I can understand so much how you feel. If the little recollections I have of him as a child make me feel so sad, I can at least have an idea of how you feel, can have some faint shadow of what your sense of loss must be. I know he will always be your child, and I did not live in your house for a year without seeing how great a help, and joy, and comfort, he was to you. You will never forget those nineteen years ; and the joy of them will be with you always, and will help you and his Father too, and so you will not be downcast. The emptiness will never be filled, but the gladness of those years will never fade. All the love you gave him will blossom and bear fruit abundantly. Had he remained other love might have challenged yours, as it is, he loved you most of all during his whole life, no one else came near you. And no one can ever take this from you. Do you remember once telling me that he had asked you—as a child—to knit a jersey for him to play football in, because he felt it would ‘bless the game.’ I believe no beggar ever asked of Bim in vain, and he would drop money into alms-boxes set in the most unlikely places—chill waiting-rooms at stations—he would catch sight of one behind a door, and would go back in order to give his pocket money to a Lifeboat or an Orphanage.

“Died Abner as a fool dieth?” a thousand times No. ‘In the great lustihead of his young powers’ he passed on to meet his peers, the heroes of old.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

And you—you take your place among the Mothers of Heroes. Think of all those great names, Cr gy, Agincourt, Blenheim, Malplaquet, Talavera, Waterloo—we think of the great men who fought in these, and died in these battles, if so called upon. And you are the Mother of one who has died in a greater conflict than all these. For generation after generation these men shall be spoken of, and you gave birth to one of these. You bore him, and fed him at your breast, and reared him to manhood, and when you had to offer him you did not flinch. He realised this, and he spoke to me of your courage. Do you remember how he loved the play of Henry V? He knew all the chief speeches in it by heart, even when a child.

‘ By Jove I am not covetous for gold,  
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost,  
It yearns me not if men my garments wear,  
Such outward things dwell not in my desires,  
But if it be a sin to covet honour,  
I am the most offending soul alive.’

He coveted honour. He wanted to win prizes at school that he might bring them home to you. And now he has great honour, and honour that nothing can destroy; and what makes him so happy is that he can give it to you—to enjoy it with him. He would have you think of him in joy; he would have you still rejoice in such things as you and he rejoiced in.

I am glad he was always my friend.

F. S.”



*"The very name and appearance of a  
happy man breathe of good nature ;  
and help the rest of us to live."*

R. L. STEVENSON.



“ WISH I could remember when I first saw Bim. It must have been at his own home one day ; and he just appeared, taking his parents’ old friend for granted.

That was part of his extraordinary charm.

I must have seemed an old fogey to Bim—but he never let me guess it. With most winning tact he even went out of his way to make me feel that for him, at least, I was not an uncompanionable relic of another generation. Invitations used to reach me for happy little festivities, supper parties, dances, etc., to which my presence could have added no sort of lustre ; and these must have been dictated by sheer kindness of heart. I never went to any of them—they mostly began long after my own bed-time ; but I liked to think that he would have included me among his own contemporaries—and I believe he knew this.

From the very first he made me feel at ease—as age is not always allowed to be in the presence of youth. He would prove, in many gracious ways, that the years which separated us did not count. What jolly days we



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

had preparing a little foolish volume of jokes and comic drawings which he brought out for the Eton and Winchester Cricket Week, in his last year at school. What light-hearted letters, full of laughter, went to and fro during the planning of it all.

He came of a race with a genius for home affections, and with Bim the family tradition had developed a glowing vitality.

Were ever Mother and son more tenderly—more understandingly attached than he and his own Mother? The letter which he wrote to her from the trenches the day before the battle is surely one of the most beautiful and manly expressions of fortitude and filial devotion in the language.

The life which he was ready to sacrifice, held in store for him more good things than fall to the lot of most. Health, wealth, position, a passionate realisation of the joy of existence, an unusually deep appreciation of, and sympathy for, all that was best and most beautiful in the visible world, and in the hearts of his fellow creatures—all these fair things were his, treasures of a Promised Land bathed in the hues of dawn; a dawn destined never to fade into the light of common day.

P. B.-J."

*January, 1917.*

"All loss of life leaves us sad, but the loss of such a life as his gives us peculiar anguish. Our sorrow is the more acute because the portion of life realised by Bim left us all full of expectation and hope. He had gone through the ordeal of a public school, with all its limita-



tions, temptations, and petty prunings of small unrealities, and came away a sane, wholesome, light-hearted boy, unsaddened and unspoiled. Nor did the military maelstrom into which he was so soon plunged, damp the ardour of his daring gaiety. Young and old alike were drawn to him ; for he never patronised those younger than himself, nor did he slight his elders, as do so many of the present generation. And these perfect manners came from a genuine simplicity of heart, untainted by ridicule or conceit. Indeed, generous appreciation was the permanent atmosphere of his soul, alike to those who made, or were a joke.

He was singularly free from the more ordinary selfish human impulses, and found in such detachment, time for the literary talent of which he showed such promise, and performance. It was the same generous detachment from self that caused him to write home from the Front : *‘ I wouldn’t be anywhere else but here for the world.’*


Bim had but two things to give, his life and his home, and he gave both, without so much as a look backward ; though to him life was dear, and for his home—you had but to see him in it, or hear him speak of it, to know that it was his heaven on earth.

C. T. G.”



*"Yet I perceive on the height,  
Eastward, not now very far,  
A song too loud for a lark,  
A light too strong for a star."*

A. C. SWINBURNE.

“E was a very young boy when I met him for the first time, and there were scarcely any words between us. Then he went out, and his Mother showed me a poem he had written. I confess I wondered if she were going to spoil him, not in the ordinary sense of making ‘a spoiled boy’ but by making a poet out of a boy, something less real; but Bim was not of the stuff which spoils, his reality was as big as himself and though he lived to be a man, he died a boy.

His poetry was not a compliance with suggestion, but one of his impulses. His tastes were all impulses, and had the impulsive sincerity that lacks in the taste born of mere facility in adopting suggestion. What his poetry would have become I cannot tell, in bulk it is not great, but some of it seems to me to be good not merely for a boy, and particularly that in which he chose the ballad form. Perhaps a very happy boy is not in the most favourable circumstances for the premature development of whatever poetry may be in him.



That he was to the swift end a very happy boy, was not surprising, but it was a part of his charm. He certainly never had any of the moody glooms of a poet. He had no quarrel with life, and he made none. His lines fell to him in pleasant places.

Perhaps, again, a very happy home is not the best initiation of one called to great poetry ; to soar very high must always imply some divine discontent with the ground whence one flies ; and Bim's home was immensely happy and satisfying, and he belonged to it to the end. How entirely he belonged to it anyone would know who had seen him in it, any one will know who reads his letters as a soldier. These letters are so home-healthy, and it is their great charm. His love for his home he carried with him, like a relic, but something living and sacred, not the bone of a dead, lost thing.

To speak of his home brings one to speak of his capacity for affection, for his home had no rivals in it, his love for all that made it was a special grace of his.

A glance at his face, as he looked around hearth or table, was enough to convince the most careless observer how dear all were to him who sat there, of his fidelity and devotion to them.

I do not think Bim was at all shy, but many who are not shy have 'mauvaise honte.' Bim seemed never to have heard of it. His Mother told me a most revealing trait. At Winchester walking on the Downs with other lads of his age, he met the 'school walk' ; a party of small boys from a preparatory school near by walking with their master, and among them was Bim's own



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

younger brother, David. Instantly Bim left those friends with whom he was walking, made across to him, and kissed him. Not to act thus would never have occurred to Bim.

His brilliance was a lesser thing than his genius for affection, but it was not less. It never could be measured by any one who, not knowing him, had only read the little he has left in writing. I mean his brilliance was far beyond any proof he could leave to convince a stranger of it. It was not his work, but himself. Not his poems, nor his many sayings, but something in him which must have convinced anyone who knew him.

Bim's appreciation, not only of the funny, the grotesque, but also of the beautiful, was in itself a shining gift. And he was brilliantly modest and reverent.

To everything fine, in art or episode, he doffed instinctively.

His very youth made a part of his brilliance, as it made a part of his charm. He wore it with a singular fashion of having himself fashioned it, it had peculiar grace.

Youth is not always comfortable to those in juxtaposition with it ; it may be awkward, self-conscious, ungainly, intrusive, and full of knocks and angles. Bim's youth was not even immature ; it did not merely inspire the hope of better things, it seemed an excellently good thing already. A possession, not a promise.

He was intensely chivalrous.

He was born for joy as a flower in the seed is pre-chosen for colour and fragrance : life itself was the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

essence and chief of his pleasure : he loved it, as one loves a comrade without criticism. Bim loved sharing merriment. He was instinctively an entertainer, and pre-eminent as host.

I spoke of his chivalry, you saw it in an instant ; it was enough to see him speak to an old, or unlucky, or poor or sorrowful person, and it stood proved. And most of all it shone in his whole bearing towards his Mother, and his whole habit of thought of her. There was always so much to tell her, so much to hear in return ; everything she did seemed to him so worthy of praise. He was always giving her presents, and preparing happy surprises for her, and long after he had left childhood, he would arrive at her door, dragging his mattress and bedclothes after him, and accepting no demur, sleep on the floor of her room.

The foundation of chivalry is reverence ; and to the unchivalric it will always remain a puzzle why misfortune, broken age, or poverty's victims, or the prey of disaster, or beauty itself should be revered.

Of his religion I cannot speak, but his letters show that it was quite simply a part of his life, and of his joy in life. And when the end, which was the beginning, came and he saw his Captain face to face, I dare imagine they were no strangers who met ; but long and well acquaint.

JOHN AYSCOUGH.




## CHAPTER XXIV

*"He was the life and soul of everything. How we believed in him !*

*Fun or danger, it was all the same to him."*

Extract from the letter of a private soldier.

[*From Bim's younger brother.*]

“ REMEMBER Bim as being especially kind as an elder brother. He always found time either to help me with my plans, or else to let me join in his. I remember going out across the Downs with him for a picnic expedition, one of many such, he with his gun. We shot a pigeon, and cooked it over a little fire we made in a wood. While we were building our hut he used to tell me that we were Red Indians, or men far away camping in Africa, or something of that sort.

We went together one day for a steeple chase that was arranged by some neighbours across country ; Bim offered to take me along with him, although I was too young to run fast, and must have spoilt any chance of our getting in first. We walked away hand in hand, he always took my hand when I was very little, and all the time I remember that day we were either being chased by savages or else we were pursuing someone. As we forded a shallow part of the river he told me that we



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

must bend forward and pretend we were swimming so as to make the pursuers think the river was too deep to cross. At last we arrived at our goal, Bim having carried me across all the beds of nettles, or other such obstacles, to find we were almost the last to get there.

I remember walking into Amesbury with him, and having lunch there. We brought back a shiny post card of the dingy little place we had lunched in.

*Brother*  
Bim was always ready to play with me. I remember his dressing up in a counterpane and allowing me to shoot arrows at him. He went rushing by, almost falling at every step, muffled up with long trailing bits of counterpane hanging round him, yelling curious war-cries the while. He used to invent all sorts of funny names for me ; he never made fun of me, or teased me ; Bim was an unfailing source of pleasure to me, he was so especially kind. When I used to drag the whole family out after dinner to let off fire-works which belched their fiery contents almost into the very faces of the on-lookers, Bim was always ready to help me, and take my side if there were any difficulties.

We used to play Red Indians under a hollow tree in Kirk house garden. He always brought me into his games, and invented things about me. His name was Darrow when we played this game, and he said I was called Rainbow.

Once I had to write out a whole page of faults, and my governess had left the room, giving me this task and I was crying over it. Bim came in and told me he would soon write out the words for me. He was busy writing



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

when we heard the approaching steps of Mademoiselle returning. Bim couldn't get out of the room in time, so dashed under the table, which unfortunately had a frightfully short cloth upon it. This is only a little thing but it shows how ready he was always to help.

He used to go to the Stores, and buy things for me. Once he bought me a complete Red Indian outfit, and a beautiful little tent to go with it; and after he was grown up and away in France during the War, he used to write to me while I was at school. Looking back I can see what a lot of fun we had together.

D. F. T."

34 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE,

*Oct., 1916.*

"... We can all be quite sure of this, there was never anyone like Bim. We have been very blessed to have had him in our family, and we can realize how deeply blessed when we recall how he loved all of us, how especially he loved each one of us; each for our own self, and not one more than another, but just bathing us all and each in his most profound source of love and laughter.

He had so simple and so high a sense of conduct. The only thing I can imagine that might have damped the fire of his nature, or dulled his rare capacity for enjoyment, would have been the knowledge of not having done courageously, or to have done less well than he might. Now he is safe from this fear for ever.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

He has done gloriously ; he has expressed to the world his noble spirit, and those who knew him, and those who have but heard of him, praise him, a thing he loved. There must now be round his soul the sense of a great throng of voices all saying ‘well done, well done,’ a great flood of joy must lap him round, the warm congratulation of surrounding and welcoming friends, and the blessed security of duty done.

We must lift our eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh our help ; and the hills are the remembrance of what he is, and of what he has achieved.

There is the memory of his vivid joy and inexhaustible high spirits. These can never be chilled or dulled now by grief or pain ; and there is the highest hill of all—a mountain to let our eyes rest upon—the belief that he was needed in the other Life ; needed in the War still, for we see only the earthly view of it ; the spiritual conflict of which the War is but a shadow, must be of a stupendous calibre, and of a nature that we cannot realize. So if he, and all these many others, are needed there, how can we grudge them ? The only possible attitude of mind is to open as it were both hands in giving them, and to say, ‘Go on ! and prosper—there as here.’

\* \* \*

“ . . . My one thought is the remembrance of how he made everyone happy who knew him. And of his friendliness to all humanity.

P. B.”



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ . . . I saw a good deal of — when I was in London. She is nursing at the Endell Street Hospital, and had several Grenadiers in her ward. She asked them who they liked best of their officers and they all answered: ‘Mr. Tennant is the officer for us,’ and could not say enough of him.

G. W.”

“ . . . Best, brightest, bravest—it is unfathomable. There are no words. . . .

M. M.”

“ . . . I, though I only have known Bim for two years, feel a gap which can never be filled; I shall always feel the gratitude for his friendship. I am sure he faced death with the marvellous vitality, courage, and love of beautiful ideas and things that always actuated him. His only sorrow in death would be your sorrow, and that of those who loved him. You were always his one thought, and he would never even smoke, because he had promised you, once, not to. He was convinced of a future life. I am sure that a vitality such as his can never be wasted.

O. S.”

“ . . . I shall never forget his keenness when we met him at Salisbury Station the day of the outbreak of the War. His one idea was to go out and fight for his country, and he was so pleased when he found that he was just within the age-limit for the Army; I think 17 being the youngest that were taken. It was good to see such spirit and courage, his one thought was to do his part! I met the wife of a Grenadier a few months ago and she



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

said how often her husband had spoken of him. He had told her how exceptionally clever Bim was, he said there was nothing he could not do, and that everyone loved him. . . .

A. T."

" . . . What will you do without him? his merry quips, and jokes and smiles, and all his especial charm and tenderness? He had not been at Stanway many minutes before he had captivated everyone—Mockett could hardly 'wait' at dinner. Bim was entertaining us all. They were all so happy and he was so brilliant! I grew to know him as a grown-up boy, the quick leap they take from little schoolboys. He was a 'Wonder Boy,' and I am so glad he had the pleasure of publishing his poems, and of making you that lovely gem-like dedication!

M. W."

" . . . Do keep constantly in mind that no one was ever happier than Bimbo, and that you made happiness for him. I keep thinking how lovable and brave he was. He had the gift of banishing from Life everything that was commonplace, or dreary, or heavy. One can never think of him of doing anything but with kindness. I keep thinking of him, and always of comforting thoughts about him, laden with great sorrow and affection.

E. G."

" . . . To say why we loved him is difficult, it was chiefly because he was so absolutely himself, and how



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

lovable that self was is difficult to express. His actions were entirely unselfconscious, and often beautiful. Bim always went straight to the heart of things, and people.

A. C. M. I."

" . . . My first memory of Bim is at the Glen in 1908 or 9. I was then much struck by his gallantry, and by his sense of responsibility as a host. I noticed his companionship with his Father. Bim was exuberant and gave a great deal, but he was also remarkably receptive. I treasure the memory of his rapt attention to my stories of South Africa and of my own youth in Louisiana. He would encourage one to go on by giving of his own store of experience or memory of books he had read, or tales heard and retained, so that one had the great incentive, which is a sense of give and take.

Christina remembers his making a wooden sword for her, also a dagger which he covered with silver paper; and his anxiety for fear the glue would not be dry before she left. He girded it on her with a large handkerchief. His love of adventure was intense, yet no excitement or intensity of mood seemed to lessen his good nature towards others.

I remember on our second visit his playing tennis in a covered court and how lithe and active he was.

I wish I could remember the things he said, but I have a sense of his aptness in capping conversation, and his quickness and intelligence as a child. Some rhymes of his at a rhyming game we played in the



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

evening were so quick and clever. One impromptu I can recall :

A pretty little collie dog that on the ground did lie O !  
Spied Uncle Archie's rounded calf, and at it then did fly O !  
The owner of the collie dog his pardon then did beg O !  
But we all patted the good dog who'd punctured Uncle's leg O !

The next time I recall Bim was in Edinburgh, when he acted as page to you in the General Assembly : when he showed a certain remote dignity which ceremonial demanded, still quite unselfconscious, but responding instinctively to pageantry.

When I saw him next it was at 34 Queen Anne's Gate, and he came rushing into the room and gladdened us all by his presence. He was eighteen when I saw him next, and he picked up every thread of past years as easily as if there had been no intervals. It is unusual, surely, for a boy of eighteen to be glad to see a friend of his Mother's, and to show no shyness, only in manner and expression showing real pleasure? He would have another take him into their confidence and place just as he took you into his.

Then there was the Stanway party, when he and Clare, and Yvo, and Mary shone with each their different radiance in Mary's inspiring atmosphere. I remember Bim reading aloud his favourite passages from Shakespeare, and singing Rag-time, and at the lunch in Gloucester I remember his talking to me about modern poetry, his sympathies always disarming his criticism.

How warm and cordial and glad he always was ! He flashed through life. I am sure there was greater joy in



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Heaven when his radiant young face appeared there ;  
he had so much to give.

A. C."

" . . . If, as I believe, we are put on earth to give, and give again our love, our time, our energy, our sense of humour, all we are and all we have to others, then Bim in his short life achieved more than many who reach hoary old age. And God, who made him so pure, so gay, so compassionate, and so generous, saw fit to raise him early to ' that highest promotion of all.'

You gave a precious gift to the world when you bore Bim, your love and sympathy enriched his life and made it, as he tells you, one of the happiest that has ever been, and it radiated happiness. Can one ask more than that ? Yes, I know ; only to go on feeling him by one's side, there, in the flesh to one's sight and touch, developing according to one's design for him, continuing to contribute to one's daily happiness in the small ways that make up life. This longing for the bodily presence of those we love is so strong and so natural, I compassionate your grief, divining something of your suffering, and also for myself, because I loved Bim, and shall miss him from the woods and hills at Glen, and from the Wilsford water-meadows and fire-side. But I am so thankful to have known him, to have watched him grow up, to have experienced his gaiety, and kindness, and unfailing courtesy. He is crystallized in my heart on the threshold of manhood in all its vigour, with all his aspirations never to grow old while we advance, the very memory of him



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

helping to keep our ideals fresh, and our joys untainted. I long to say to him once, '*Thank you, Bim, for all you have been to us——*' I can't write more.

L. W.-T."

" . . . Moral and intellectual ambition are as rare as personal ambition is common. Bim had it in a finer degree than any being, except my sister Laura, that I have ever known. It means love of life with intensity and sensibility, a movement upward of body and soul. He had all this : fun, fancy, rapture, and goodness to a rare degree, and he had this fine intensity with a glorious simplicity and sunshine.

His love letters to you, his verses ; his very presence in the room filled one with life. His amazing spontaneity, his generosity and care for others, and his Christ-like sympathy. His letter to you is the most perfect thing a woman ever held in her hand to call her own. Death cannot level such heights as these.

M. A."

" . . . I found here in the County Hospital, a young Grenadier who was in your boy's company, Cawn by name, a corporal.

'How we all loved him,' he said ; 'he'd never be far from us. The whole regiment loved him, he belonged to us ; a few hours before he fell he passed us quite close, and gave me a cheerful word. He was the life and soul of everything, and how we believed in him ; fun or danger it was all the same to him ! I heard him talking to another officer, Captain Goschen by name, and he



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

was telling him how a shell had come so near him. 'These shells bore me,' he said. 'What do you do when they drop so close?' Captain Goschen asked. 'O stand on one leg like a chicken, till it's over,' he said, laughing: and, 'Isn't that like our Gilbert?' I asked a pal near me. We called him 'Gilbert the Filbert' from a song he used to sing to us—he belonged to us, he did.' "

[*Extract from a letter from E. M.*]

[*A village letter.*]

" May God lighten your heavy burden. Though he is gone he will never be forgotten by the poor here, or by the poor children. He was a true friend to us all in his short life. It has cast a gloom over the whole village. He was always so ready, always so kind.

A. F."

[*Another village letter.*]

" Just these few lines wishing to express to you deepest sorrow at your dear Son. He will be sadly missed. Always so good and friendly. The whole village feel it. Do let this console you, my lady, that he gave his dear young life for us all. From your humble and ever true servant,  
E. H."

" EASTON GREY, MALMESBURY,  
1 Oct., 1916.

" What a vivid, glowing spirit, and what a supreme gift for making sunshine for others! No one could remain gloomy in his atmosphere, he radiated fun and enjoyment. Everyone must feel sure that such a burning



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

spirit must live on for ever, and is even now fulfilling some purpose of God's until you meet again.

'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.' It seems to you a long time to wait for that joyful reaping, but to me it does not seem far off. The beauty of Bim's character, and his faith, is a wonder to me. It will beckon me on to higher things. We can never look back with that loved spirit calling us to choose the best. Job says, 'How small a whisper do we hear of God'—but we hear His voice speaking in these lives of sacrifice.

L. G. S."

"Forgive a letter from a complete stranger. We came out together in August last year, and as we shared a room for several weeks I got to know Bim pretty well. I have never met anyone who had the same power of getting not only the most but the best out of every moment of life; and it is this that makes one feel poignantly his loss, even in these days of universal sorrow.

As I am sure you know, Bim's devotion to you was the lodestone of his life.

H. S. A.-F."

". . . His letter. . . . Indeed I noticed that line of ours from *Non Nobis*, and it bowed my head in loving pride. And I love your great-souled reading of the past.

Shadows—shadows; but still—that quotation, in such a setting—is a reward, a wonderful reward; or is it, hope? I am uplifted by the spirit of that letter.

H. C."



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

DONHEAD LODGE.

“ I, who have no son to offer my country, can look with reverence, almost regret, at the honour which falls to the living, and to the dead.

W. K.”

“ I think of the days when I used to see your Bim as a little child, and care so much for him. There comes back to me the picture of him as he was in his fascinating early childhood, the most unusual and remarkable babyhood, more fascinating as a child than any I have ever known. Even then, small child as he was, I felt the big personality behind, and I believed you had been given the supreme gift of life to a woman, a great and noble son. The knowledge that you have been indeed given that gift for always is your help and comfort now. Nothing can change that, nor Time nor Death.

D. ST. C.”

“ A friend of unfailing loyalty and understanding.

C. E. B.”

“ I loved your beautiful Bim. He was the dearest, brightest, kindest boy I ever knew, and when he used to come to us he was like a ray of sunlight over everything. There will never be anyone like him again.

A. F. K.”



“So light of heart and so full of life. No, there can be no shadows where he dwells. I think of him as a little boy accompanying ‘Once in Royal David’s City’ on his small banjo with no thought of dissonance or incongruity, and indeed in the spirit which he brought to the performance there was none. And so throughout his life—laughter, merriment, and the deeper things of life went quite naturally and simply, hand in hand. He was made to find happiness, and to dispense it generously, and I think of him still finding it, still shedding it in these new fields among so many familiar friends and companions.

A. T.”

“A Russian friend of mine, an ex-Member of the Duma and a Revolutionary, would like so much to have some copies of that very beautiful paper which you gave your friends in St. Margaret’s—with Bim’s letter to you. He says he would like to send it to Russia, *as the highest expression of the soul of a British officer*. If you feel proud of this, as I do for your son, and if you approve, will you let me have some copies? It was, you know, a very wonderful legacy.

H. C.”

[*A letter from Bim’s servant.*]

“It is with many feelings of sorrow that I offer my humble sympathy in your tremendous loss. From having been in attendance on Mr. Tennant for one



## EDWARD WYNNDHAM TENNANT

year and two months, I had become attached to him as much as my duties and position would allow. He was the heart and soul in any movement to benefit others, always cheerful in times of adversity, fearless in the execution of his duties, and God-fearing. His loss is regretted by everyone. Yours respectfully,

14971, Private H. S. LOMAS,  
Head-quarters Royal Flying Corps,  
B.E.F., France."

SCOTS GUARDS, FRANCE.

"I am a stranger to you, but I want to write to you and tell you how I personally grieve for your brave and brilliant boy. I should explain that I am a Church of Scotland Chaplain, and though I did not meet him in an official capacity I often met him ; once or twice he came in and sang to our men, frequently I had little talks with him, and it was always to feel what a fine, clear-sighted, honest, high-souled boy he was.

About a month ago I travelled with him from Marcourt to Amiens ; he was so full of life and energy. I can only say that your boy was a ray of white sunlight to us out here. It lay upon us for a little and is gone, but still there remains with us the joy of its memory. He was so happy and so cheerful that when he came into a room, it seemed to light up, and we all got merry again. He was brave, so brave that no one ever questioned it, it was just expected ; it was himself. He would do all that was ever asked of him, and the little more which makes a



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

gallant soldier, and a gentleman. He also had that charm of manner which endeared him to everyone, and made him—that wonderful thing—a favourite with his fellows.

In giving him for your country, you have made a gift above the ordinary. He always did, and now finally has done, his home and family magnificent credit.

W. PHIN, G.C.F.”







“And why should I not speak freely and without reserve, communicating my whole thoughts on this subject, of which as I am now drawing nearer to it I seem to have a clearer sense and view ?

I must say then I am clearly of opinion that these men, though dead to us, do now truly enjoy life, and such a life as alone can justly deserve the name.

For while we are closed in these mortal frames, our bodies, we are bound down to a law of necessity. But our minds are of a heavenly original, descended from the blissful seats above, and thrust down and immersed into these gross habitations of the Earth, a situation altogether unsuitable to a divine and eternal nature.

Nor have I been led into this belief from my own reasonings only, but by the authority of those great and exalted souls, the philosophers who have lived before us. I say that these philosophers laid it down as their fixed and grand principle that our minds are an efflux and portion of that Divine and Universal Mind that governs the Whole. This seems also an argument for the pre-existence of souls, and that they were endued with knowledge before they entered upon this stage. Thus Plato argues.”

CICERO.



POEMS  
BY  
E. W. T.



“ And they shall be accounted poet kings  
Who simply sing the most heart-easing things.”

KEATS.



## DEDICATION

*TO P. G. AND G. W.*

My first small ship I dedicate  
To twain I love : its little freight  
Is very trifling : that it may  
Not founder I devoutly pray.  
The letters four you see above—  
They represent the two I love.  
One is my Mother—(I've no mate,  
Nor any need)—I know she'll wait  
Down on the quay, and wave her hand,  
Hoping my craft may win to land.  
And if it's scuttled in the dark  
She'll help me build another barque.  
She is the one, and of the other  
I'll tell you this, he was her brother ;  
And better pens than mine have writ  
His kindness, poesy and wit.  
As she the dearest brother had.  
So may I count myself more glad—  
More doubly blest than any other  
In having such a perfect Mother.



WORPLE FLIT

UPON the feast of Candlemas to Church as I did go,  
I met a witch upon the road who bobbing went and slow.  
“What makes you bob as you walk along?” said I,  
a-bowing low.

“Oak forests seven mine eye hath seen to wax and wane,”  
quo’ she,

“’Tis to bring the luck to the folk who flit from Worple  
’cross the sea.”

“If you ride behind on my old grey mare to Diddle-  
combe Farm,” said I,

“Will you let me look from the inglenook at the good  
folk passing by?

The road is hard, and your joints are stiff, and ’tis yet  
too light to fly.”

“By my toad that lived in an old chalk stone full seventy  
year,” quo’ she,

“We’ll ride together to charm the flit from Worple  
’cross the sea.”

So up behind the beldame clamb as light as an Autumn  
leaf,

And she did bewail the nimble gob’ men call the Dairy  
Thief

(Who never harmed the tidy lass—’twas the trollop he  
brought to grief).



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ By the ell-long whisker of my grey cat that hunts the  
hare on the lea,  
I fear the goblin will flit to-night with the folk of the  
South Countree.”

And as we jogged along the road, the night grew wondrous fine,  
And out of the Hills the Hill-folk came, and the Down-  
men, all in a line,  
Their packs right full of their elfin gear, and their flasks  
of their trollish wine.

“ By my slit-tongued finch that chitters in French like  
any condemn’d Mounseer,  
If the Dairy Thief is to flit,” quo’ the witch—“ we can  
charm him best from here.”

Then limber as any stripling boy she vaulted to the  
ground,  
As past the elfin legions filed, in green and silver gown’d ;  
And their talk was soft as a cony’s back, and swift as a  
whippet hound.

“ By the puckered cheek of my barbary ape ! ’tis an ill  
sight we see,  
The glamour of England fades this day with the folk of  
the South Countree.”

The good folk passed—and silence fell, save where among  
the trees  
Their elfin jargon echoed back and sighed upon the  
breeze,



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Like channering mice in barley shocks, or humming honey  
bees.

“Now by my chin and span-long beard,” I heard the  
beldame cry,

“I wot we ha’ missed the Dairy Thief ’mid the good folk  
flitting by.”

But scarcely had the word been said, when down a lapin  
track,

Behold the goblin slowly come, bent double beneath his  
pack,

And slow and mournful was his stride, for ever a-glancing  
back.

“Give ye the luck,” the beldame cried: “give ye the  
luck,” quo’ she,

And the Dairy Thief he doffed his cap, but never a word  
spake he.

Then over a knoll and under a stile, until my eyes were  
sore,

I watched him go; so sad an elf I never did see before,  
And I knew as I looked, the broad Downland was never  
to see him more.

“By oak, and ash, and thorn, good folk,” the beldame  
then quo’ she,

“I fain would follow by hill and hollow, the men of the  
South Countree.”

Silent I stood—and thought to hear across the open Down,  
Some lingering lilt of a goblin song from pixie squat and  
brown,



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Or perchance to spy some faerie dame in her dewy cobweb  
gown.

I search'd—and found ne witch ne folk, but as I stood  
forlorn,

Three green leaves flickered to the ground,—of oak and  
ash and thorn.

*Poperinghe,*

*June, 1916.*



PICTURES

A FINER heritage than house and lands  
Is mine : for on the canvas hanging there  
More love is centred and instilled more care  
Than in broad acres. He who understands  
What deep-laid passions ebbed through brush and hands  
Of these brocaded masters, long since dead  
(Their souls are with us yet, tho' life has fled),  
Let him who feels the magic of their wands  
Thank God afresh, and let him sit and gaze,  
Trying to stir within his troubled mind  
The splendour of those oft-depicted days.  
With what romance is every portrait lined !  
Each sweeping stroke a softly-flowing phrase,  
That word by word its story doth unwind.

*Winchester, 1914.*



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## THE GAZEBO

HIGH by the side of the flint-set wall,  
Moss-grown and lichened by centuries' tears,  
At the foot of the garden where teasles grow tall  
Stood the ancient Gazebo ; the leaves used to fall  
At his feet once a year, till the homage of years  
Had long ceased to give any pleasure at all.

He leaned on the wall like a janitor old,  
He nodded at landmarks who bowed themselves out,  
The mill by the ford, and the barn near the fold,  
Till even midsummer seemed distant and cold,  
And 'demned him a dotard—he thought of the rout  
Of tulips and taffeta under the mould.

The road to Devizes, laid over the hill,  
Grew dim and mouse-grey ; as the sun bowed his head,  
The scent of sweet Daphne swept over to fill  
And to flood the Gazebo with perfume, until  
He remembered a friend—'twas an old year, long  
dead—  
And he saw once again the old barn and the mill.

Around him sprang up on an instant a score  
Of friends who had crumbled and fallen away,  
Once again he was young—"The Sky Rocket" and  
"Boar"

And the rickety toll-gate with rapture he saw  
As they were long ago ; and he smelled the mown hay,  
And it seemed to him sweeter than ever before.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Back came the old landmarks, the trees and the spires,  
The hedges and houses men's grandfathers knew.  
Fresh, fresh was his memory, love never tires  
Of remembering friends, and all memory desires  
Through the ages, is Love—and he marvelled anew  
As his flint sides were filled with the scent of sweet briars.

And the country grew dim . . . till he heard a faint  
sound

Of voices and hammering, shovels and picks,  
And fresh as a flower on a neighbouring mound  
A maiden sat reading—she never looked round  
Till the grey old Gazebo was just broken bricks,  
And the masons had pulled him all down to the ground.

*Laventie,*

*February, 1916.*

## THE KNIGHT AND THE RUSSET PALMER

“GIVE you good day, Sir Knight,  
And whither may you be bound?  
Methinks I could read your hand, Sir Knight,  
As sure as the world is round.”

“What do you lack, you Palmer old?  
And what would you have wi' me?  
Will you give me word of my true-love  
That sails across the sea?”



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ Give me your hand, Sir Knight,  
I’ll riddle you all in one,  
I see a ship that is fair and tall  
But mariners see I none.

“ And the sails are ripp’d like the finest veil  
That ever ha’ deck’d a bride—  
And yet is the sea as molten bronze  
And the sky full clear and wide.”

“ Where be the mariners, tell me now,  
You Palmer wrinkled and old,  
And where is my rose-petal lady-love  
With her maidens and spearmen bold ? ”

“ Patience, O patience, Sir Knight,  
I wot that your lady fair  
Is singing before her mirror bright  
As she plaits her elfin hair.”

“ Riddle me true and riddle me swift,  
You Palmer bent and gray,  
Where be the men and the hand-maidens  
With whom she sailed away ? ”

“ I see a storm, Sir Knight,  
And the waves sing in mine ears,  
And mariners sink and bubbles rise  
From the maids and the men wi’ spears.”



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ And where was my love when the storm was high,  
You palsied heavy-eyed Sage ? ”

“ I wot she brewed a draught, Sir Knight,  
And conned a runic page,

“ And now upon this stricken barque  
Alone, your lady fair  
Still sits before her mirror bright  
And plaits her elfin hair.”

“ If this be true, you Palmer wise,  
Now by my knighthood dear  
How shall my true-love win to port  
With never a soul to steer ? ”

“ Nay, have no fear, Sir Knight,  
And look not so askance,  
I feel a breeze that softly blows  
Toward the land of France.”

“ These are good tidings, russet man,  
Would you could riddle me  
Of what my gilliflower dreams  
Adrift on the sea ? ”

“ Now pardum notum ! good Sir Knight,  
Both when the tempest roared,  
And now when softly glides the ship,  
She thinks upon her lord,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ And verily, Sir Knight,  
To shew her love burns true,  
I wot she hath an image made  
And fashioned it of you.”

“ These are strange things, you peddling Seer,  
Of which you bring me word,  
I thought my love a simple maid  
As any singing bird.”

“ Listen awhile, Sir Knight,  
I see your true-love stand  
Beside a crucible—she holds  
Your image in her hand,

“ She dips her finger and she makes  
Upon your waxen face  
Some figure that I wot not of,  
—Doubtless some sign of grace.”

“ Now peace, you babbling Palmer !  
My head is like to burst  
Wi’ standing i’ the sun too long.  
Where may I quench my thirst ? ”

“ Softly I pray, Sir Knight,  
Behold ! your lady fair  
Places around your waxen gorge  
A strand of plaited hair,



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“What may this vision mean, Sir Knight?  
Your image high she hangs  
Until a beam, good lack! Sir Knight,  
You seem in mortal pangs!”

“Now Holy Jesu save—my throat!  
For I do clearly see  
How hath this harlot seared my soul  
With hellish sorcery!

“I cannot breathe—’fore God—I hang!  
O Mary, shrive my soul!  
My heart is like the hissing ice,  
My throat a thirsty coal.”

*Poperinghe,*  
*April, 1916.*



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## SONG

How shall I tell you of the freedom of the Downs ?  
You who love the dusty life and durance of great towns,  
And think the only flowers that please embroider ladies'  
    gowns,  
How shall I tell you ?

How shall I tell you of the Avon's sweeping flow,  
With the pollards like old henchmen in a sage and solemn  
    row,  
And the silvery waters-cuts that shine when thymy breezes  
    blow ?  
How shall I tell you ?

How shall I tell you of the roads that stretch away  
Like streamers from a dancing pole in the tripsome month  
    of May,  
For what care you for aught beside your porto and tokay ?  
How shall I tell you ?

How shall I tell you how sweet it is to lie  
Upon the cool and springy turf and gaze into the sky ?  
But it would only crease your vest and set your locks  
    awry—  
I shall not tell you.

*Poperinghe,*  
*July, 1916*



## THE MAD SOLDIER\*

I DROPP'D here three weeks ago, yes—I know,  
 And it's bitter cold at night, since the fight—  
 I could tell you if I chose—no one knows  
 Excep' me and four or five, what ain't alive.  
 I can see them all asleep, three men deep,  
 And they're nowhere near a fire—but our wire  
 Has 'em fast as fast can be. Can't you see  
 When the flare goes up? Ssh! boys; what's that noise?  
 Do you know what these rats eat? Body-meat!  
 After you've been down a week, an' your cheek  
 Gets as pale as life, and night seems as white  
 As the day, only the rats and their brats  
 Seem more hungry when the day's gone away—  
 An' they look as big as bulls, an' they pulls  
 Till you almost sort o' shout—but the drought  
 What you hadn't felt before makes you sore.  
 And at times you even think of a drink . . .  
 There's a leg acrost my thighs—if my eyes  
 Weren't too sore, I'd like to see who it be,  
 Wonder if I'd know the bloke if I woke?—  
 Woke? By damn, I'm not asleep—there's a heap  
 Of us wond'ring why the hell we're not well . . .  
 Leastways I am—since I came it's the same  
 With the others—they don't know what *I* do,

\* This poem, written three months before the author's death in battle, was not included in his *Worple Flit and other Poems*. It appeared, first, in the second edition of *Wheels*.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Or they wouldn't gape and grin.—It's a sin  
To say that Hell is hot—'cause it's not:  
Mind you, I know very well we're in hell.—  
In a twisted hump we lie—heaping high,  
Yes! an' higher every day.—Oh, I say,  
This chap's heavy on my thighs—damn his eyes.

*June 13th, 1916.*



TO ROY

COMPANION of a hundred walks, and friend  
Whose scent of bird and rabbit ne'er proved wrong ;  
Who, leaping round my feet with motley throng  
Of spaniels and retrievers, used to rend  
The air with barks, but who would sometimes lend  
A sympathetic ear, silky and long,  
And promise to put right whate'er was wrong.  
Now you and I, dear Roy, no more shall bend  
Our steps towards the Loch or Shepherd's house  
Thinking we should be home again by noon,  
But staying out till dusk, in hope of grouse.  
Dear Roy ! Those days were over far too soon. . . .  
I wish I might go back a space and see  
That little spaniel, still so dear to me.

*Winchester, 1914.*



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

IN MEMORIAM W. W., B.

*Neuve Chapelle, 1915*

HE looked ahead and smiled, and then looked back  
On his past years, nor wished them here again,  
But rather, glancing o'er their tangled skein  
Sought the white threads as though there were no black  
That vainly mocked him. Clearly at his back  
He marshalled his misfortunes ; once again  
He greeted them, despite his present pain  
That could not stretch his spirit on its rack.  
It is the lot of some to keep a friend  
Lifelong, and sharing with him young endeavour,  
Take the last fence 'longside him at the end,  
Well-tried companions, who no fate may sever,  
And though for six short months I knew my friend,  
My heart shall keep his memory for ever.



THE NIGHTINGALE

A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO

THE stout Boccaccio hath a pleasant tale  
Of fair Romagna's granite-girdled city  
Where alway Phoebus smiles, nor rain nor hail  
Invades its leafy arbours. More's the pity  
That all who love and feel their love grow keener  
Fare not as Richard and his Caterina.

There lived in this great city on a time  
One Lizio da Valbona who, grown old  
In single gallantry, when past his prime  
Married a comely dame, and we are told  
That for the love and happiness he brought her,  
The lady did reward him with a daughter.

She was a lovely babe and year by year  
The summer smiled on her and went his way,  
Only to find the damsel yet more fair  
On his return, until he fain would stay  
Among Romagna's cypress groves for aye,  
Till Autumn's ripe postilions bade him fly.

So passed the unwilling seasons, far and wide  
The fame of Caterina spread abroad,  
And she was named "the fair," "the starry-eyed,"  
Yet saw she none whom her young heart adored.  
And civet-scented gallants came and went,  
Leaving the damsel virgin and content.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

And thus she lived, scorning her suitors gay,  
Happy beneath her father's roof to dwell,  
While folk said she grew fairer each new day,  
And voyagers, returning home, would tell  
How in Romagna whence they lately came  
A maiden lived who put the sun to shame.

Among the youths who came to Lizio's house  
Was one by name Ricciardo ; he was tall  
And dark of eye, but quiet as a mouse,  
And seemed the gentlest gallant of them all.  
His speech was soft, his look a mute caress  
That breathed a love his tongue dared not express.

In silent adoration long he mourned,  
Nor like his glibber rivals raved aloud ;  
But in his secret closet hotly burned  
To tell his passion—would the maid be proud  
To him, as to her myriad mincing lovers ?  
“ Who risks fair nothing, nothing fair discovers.”

So thought Ricciardo, but he little guessed  
How Caterina's maiden fancies strayed  
Towards himself—how as her hair was dressed  
By the deft fingers of her Pisan maid  
Her thoughts were with him, and her bosom heaved  
With deep unspoken love that left her grieved.

Now Eros wept to see how each did love,  
And wove a spell as only Eros knows,



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

That when fair Caterina dropped her glove,  
Of all her train of tall and tender beaux,  
Alone Ricciardo did the glove espy,  
And hid it in his bosom with a sigh.

Then swiftly, silently he 'scaped the rout  
And wandered in the bosky cool and dark,  
His hungry soul was faint from amorous drought,  
And yet his heart soared as the earliest lark  
Mounts to the empyrean, and above  
His feathered helpmate sings of *love, love, love*.

That evening when the suitors bade adieu,  
Ricciardo was not there ; I wot he stayed  
In hiding by a deep yew hedge, then through  
The arbours searched till he did spy the maid,  
And bowing low as he returned her glove,  
At last found tardy utterance of his love.

“ Dear Lady Caterina, I am here  
To throw myself unworthy at your feet !  
Your little glove to me is far more dear  
Than any hope of heaven : the fiery heat  
Of my long pent-up love allows no morrow—  
Give me some hope or I shall die of sorrow ! ”

The maiden started—in her star-like eyes  
Was all he hoped to hear, and as she turned  
Towards Ricciardo's kneeling form, surprise  
Chilled not the joy that in her bosom burned,



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

One moment served to quell her lover's qualms,  
The next he rose and locked her in his arms.

Where on the wide world's undulating face  
Breathed there a happier couple than these two?  
Search the creation, wing through virgin space  
At the white meteor's speed, nowhere there grew  
A more devoted, passionate Philopena  
Than brave Ricciardo and sweet Caterina.

In silence long they kissed—a spoken word  
Were sacrilege to Eros—then at last  
The sweet conspirators in haste conferred  
To counter much lost loving in the past,  
O with what dainty rapture is she scheming,  
Now with what gallant plots his thoughts are teeming.

“Belovéd heart, if you could but contrive  
Upon your father's balcony to sleep,  
No earthly power while yet I be alive,  
Shall from our love its consummation keep.”  
“Dear Ricciardo,” came the soft return,  
“Our perfect love is all my heart's concern.”

They parted in a long embrace. What sage  
Can solve the spell that sends the world amiss?  
That since the earliest gallant wore his gage,  
Two partings are the payment for one kiss.  
But list, sweet reader, spite of such sad magic  
Our tender lovers' fate is not so tragic.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

The morrow, Phoebus' car had almost won  
His noonday lap, when worthy Lizio's dame  
Found her young daughter barring out the sun  
With curtains and abed: she cried, "for shame  
To lie so late." Then did the maid protest,  
"So hot the night was that I could not rest."

At this her mother grieved, nor kept her ire  
But at fair Catherine's bidding swiftly came  
To Lizio da Valbona to require  
Gracious permission, in his daughter's name,  
To rest that night upon the balcony,  
That sleep might visit her more easily.

Now Lizio first refused—"What whims are these?"  
Quoth he, "Let her sleep where she is," but when  
His daughter came and tearful on her knees  
Besought, he turn'd as weak as other men,  
And hearkened kindly to his daughter's tale,  
And how she fain would hear the nightingale.

So first she pleaded gently of the heat  
That so fatigued her—how she could not rest  
Within four slumber-shunnèd walls, how sweet  
'Twould be to make the balcony her nest;  
And when the nightingale had ceased his song  
How softly would she sleep the whole night long!

His gruff resistance, like a worn guitar  
With strings oft pluck'd, snapped suddenly: with joy



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

She kissed him—said she knew her dear Papa

Loved her so well. Then to some girlish ploy  
Of needlework she turned, while Eros smiled  
To see how gently age had been beguiled.

Now is her heart so light that she would fain

Climb some dark valley-shadowing peak, and stand  
Proudly erect, and tell and tell again

How in Italia's fair and fragrant land  
Love's dear conspiracies do aye succeed,  
Bringing to lovers honey-sweet remede.

That evening came the gallants as of old,

And bowed and mouthed and minced and made  
grimaces,

As is the mode of Jackanapes—all told

How they did love, and with their pencilled faces  
And deep-dyed whiskers, looked, for all the world,  
Like some great simian circus brushed and curled.

Poor Caterina suffered their advances,

With rapturous eyes that looked out far beyond

These frisking poops, whose lewd and sidelong glances

Engaged her, while the raiment they had donned—  
All slash'd and loop'd like any winking barber's—  
She thought did mightily deface her arbours.

At length proud Phoebus drove his chariot race

To the soft bosom of a rosy range

Of pillow-dimpling clouds: a fitting grace

To such a tender feast—who'd not exchange



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

A thousand nights in some chill heaven above  
For one such passionate eve of perfect love ?

The little cloudlets crawled like straggling geese  
Across the dusky meadow of the sky,  
While stolid men, with simple souls at peace,  
Snore in their beds—nor lie awake and sigh  
For love—thus Lizio and his lady wife  
Ne'er slept so sound in all their wedded life.

Scarcely had Cynthia topp'd the tufty trees  
And shown her wan face to the shrouded town  
So softly slumb'ring, when with amorous ease  
Ricciardo climbs, O was there ever known  
So steep an Alp whose snowy virgin peak  
Promised the joy that Peris dare not speak ?

Now is the springtide of her maidenhood  
Merged in the radiant summer of their love,  
While curious Zephyr rustles through the wood  
And plays around the balcony. What grove  
In happy Hellas ever knew such bliss ?  
On Psyche's lip ne'er lay a tenderer kiss

Than did Ricciardo on his fair bestow,  
And gladly Caterina did return  
His sweet caresses, when did Cupid know  
Such passion in his Psyche hotly burn ?  
(O happy Love ! surcrowned with celandines !  
Look not with censure on these halting lines.)



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Thus sweetly surfeiting they lingered long  
Upon the bourne of wakefulness and sleep,  
Now would they softly slumber—then the song  
Of tireless Philomel would o'er them creep,  
And happy-careless of the wide-eyed moon  
They found the fleet hours vanish far too soon.

At length they lie in blissful weariness,  
Closely entwined, how he doth joy to drink  
Her honey-gentle breathing, soft caress  
That leads them swiftly to the drowsy brink  
Of Morpheus' dark demesne ; one pallid peep—  
And Cynthia spies the lovers fast asleep.

Now fades the moon into her grey beyond,  
And all the little clouds come sailing back,  
Pink-finned and tipped like fishes in a pond,  
Each swift upon the other's rosy track ;  
Then comes the sun, and lo ! each cloudy clown  
That blushed so deep, is pale as thistle-down.

Now Lizio de Valbona by some chance  
Passed by the balcony at early dawn,  
And, fondly father-like, he needs must glance  
Into its leafy fastness from the lawn,  
That rose in terraces of shaven green,  
He halted—spake no word of what he'd seen,

But sought his wife without a moment's pause.

“ Although the night hath been so cool,” quoth he,



EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

“ Yet Caterina could not rest because  
The nightingale sang on the balcony,  
And now sweet Philomel exhausted lies,  
Come ere the happy songster wakes and flies.”

But even as Lizio and his lady wife  
Gazed on the sleeping lovers, some soft breeze  
Wakened Ricciardo and his fair—their life  
That but a moment since was pure Heart's-Ease  
And Love-in-mist, bitter as Rue became  
At sight of Lizio and his frowning dame.

“ So this is how my kindness is returned,”  
Exclaimed the knight, “ O, if I were not kind  
You should be hanged, Sir, and the maiden burn'd  
(But that there lurks far distant in my mind  
Dim recollections of some gallant tale  
When I did bravely play the Nightingale).

“ So, as I think you love her well and true,  
Behold your choice, either the maid to wed  
Without delay (his rapier here he drew)  
Or she to count herself among the dead.  
For he who soils fair honour and would fly  
Must speedily prepare himself to die.”

“ Good Sir,” quoth Ricciardo, “ I beseech  
Your pardon for my fault—the damsel here  
Loves me as I do love her—thus your speech  
Of but a moment since hath brought sweet cheer



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

To our twin hearts that trembled side by side,  
Thus have we loved, thus feared we to have died."

" 'Tis well, to-morrow shall you twain be wed,"

Cried Lizio, and he bade his dame prepare  
The marriage feast—then turning to the bed,  
Whereon Ricciardo and his lady fair  
Nigh wept for very joy, he did require  
They should not rise till so they did desire.

Sweet pilot of Love's gentle anchorage !  
How many argosies lie sunk in sand  
Below the jagged rocks that hem the edge  
Of thy broad harbour ? Yet thy skilful hand  
Doth steer to peaceful moorings in the west  
The cockle shells that sail at Love's behest.

Thus danced the fleeting years like happy fays,  
Each ten times happier than the happy last ;  
And thus they lived their blue and silver days  
And ended them, and though all now is past  
By many laboured lustres, still the tale  
Is told of Caterina's Nightingale.

*Ypres and Poperinghe,  
June and July, 1916.*



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

## HOME THOUGHTS IN LAVENTIE

GREEN gardens in Laventie !  
Soldiers only know the street  
Where the mud is churned and splashed about  
By battle-wending feet ;  
And yet beside one stricken house there is a glimpse of  
grass,  
Look for it when you pass.

Beyond the Church whose pitted spire  
Seems balanced on a strand  
Of swaying stone and tottering brick  
Two roofless ruins stand,  
And here behind the wreckage where the back wall should  
have been  
We found a garden green.

The grass was never trodden on,  
The little path of gravel  
Was overgrown with celandine,  
No other folk did travel  
Along its weedy surface, but the nimble-footed mouse  
Running from house to house.

So all among the vivid blades  
Of soft and tender grass  
We lay, nor heard the limber wheels  
That pass and ever pass,  
In noisy continuity, until their stony rattle  
Seems in itself a battle.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

At length we rose up from this ease  
Of tranquil happy mind,  
And searched the garden's little length  
A fresh pleasaunce to find ;

And there, some yellow daffodils and jasmine hanging high  
Did rest the tired eye.

The fairest and most fragrant  
Of the many sweets we found,  
Was a little bush of Daphne flower  
Upon a grassy mound,

And so thick were the blossoms set, and so divine the scent  
That we were well content.

Hungry for Spring I bent my head,  
The perfume fanned my face,  
And all my soul was dancing  
In that little lovely place,

Dancing with a measured step from wrecked and shattered  
towns

Away . . . upon the Downs.

I saw green banks of daffodil,  
Slim poplars in the breeze,  
Great tan-brown hares in gusty March  
A-courting on the leas ;

And meadows with their glittering streams, and silver  
scurrying dace,

Home—what a perfect place.







## APPENDICES







## APPENDIX I



WHEN Bim was a child of five years old he used to attend the village school at Glen, where every Saturday there was given an object lesson in natural history. On one occasion the subject chosen was that of the silk-worm. The teacher gave fully half an hour or more to convey some facts to her apparently attentive audience, with the aid of a blackboard and frequent illustrations, the long and interesting life history of the silk-worm was placed before the class. The teacher was sanguine of good result. "Now let me see," she said cheerfully, "what you have all remembered of what I have been telling you. Can anyone here tell me something they have learned?" There was a tingling silence. No one attempted to break it in reply. "Come now," said the teacher, "let me hear something." Very shyly a voice spoke, "Silk is varra costly."

"Yes."

And another, "Silk is varra *deear*."

"Yes."

And a third, "Silk is varra expensive."

"Yes, that is right enough, but it is all the same. Can nobody here tell me anything that I have been teaching you?" And Bim, leaning forward eagerly, said in a quick little feathery voice that stammered with eagerness: "The, the, the, Mother of a silk-worm is always a moth."



## APPENDIX II

### A FRAGMENT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WRITTEN BY E. W. T. DURING THE SUMMER OF 1916

#### PREFACE



ON settling down to write a book about a person on whose life and happiness were as much to me as my own, several difficulties "present themselves to the novice." (This phrase is borrowed from that vade-mecum entitled "Manners for Men," and has such a flow about it that I shall turn it to my use.) As I was saying, the chief difficulty in writing such a book is to know what to omit; not from any idea of brevity, but from a purely sentimental feeling about "sacred memories." Of course I may leave out much that you would like to hear, and cram in large wedges of concrete boredom. That is our mutual look out. At any rate the subject of the book was, is, and ever shall be my dearest friend, and whatever nasty things I say about him emanate from a warped sense of justice, and are put in—well, perhaps to get the book to its 200th page, or—shall we say to keep his memory flowering in my heart?

#### CHAPTER I

THERE was once on the platform of Winchester Station a small boy. He was grasping a bag, and he hadn't brushed his hair that day, and his teeth only under compulsion. He was supported dexter by a play-box, sinister by a small trunk. People's eyes



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

seemed on a higher level than the top of his bowler hat, and perhaps that accounts for the fact that no one saw him, and most people tripped over either him or his impedimenta. He was looking rather rushed, when he caught sight, between the sagging figure of the stationmaster, and a string bag full of oranges, of another youth in almost the same position as himself, flanked by luggage, and o'erswept by the crowd of toe-catching hastening Humanity who seemed at least to be dodging a tidal wave or some such cataclysm to judge by their haste and vigour.

For some time these boys stood about twenty yards apart like two insignificant units of the lesser Antilles, and quite as unable to move of their own free will as those sedentary islets I have named. Patience was writ small on their faces, annoyance proclaimed itself in flamboyant capitals.

The train had come in and they had got out some ten minutes past, and their respective porters had decamped in pursuit of some more lucrative job; but this couldn't last long—the most intelligent of the two (I was the other) suddenly saw his whilom porter with an upright gentleman of about thirty in his wake. Unwary son of toil, he was just about to pass his erstwhile client when the little boy seized his sleeve and said to him, "Take my luggage to a cab, *now*, will you, please? I got you before this gentleman did." The porter looked a trifle foolish, but the young man who was following said, with a smile, "You're the person I've been looking for. Take his luggage to the waggonette, porter. Is your name Carlisle?"

"Yes," was the reply in measured tones. "I didn't know what was going to become of me, or of him either," added Carlisle, and pointed a stubby finger at the other islet, which was myself. The young man came over to me and said, "Hullo, is this Fenwick?" "Yes, Sir," said I, following previous instructions as to how to address demi-gods. "Well, this *is* all right," he added, "I've found both of you. Come along." And off we went.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Our next ordeal was a tea of ham and boiled eggs partaken of with innumerable other little scallywags, who eyed us as we sat side by side with almost as much suspicion as we regarded them. The atmosphere was one of tension, of intrigue all against all, for all the world like a gang of Russian anarchists, who are not quite sure of each other; and this atmosphere underwent what a criminal humorist might call a Petrogradual crescendo, until the door opened and the head master came in. He advanced to the table where the new boys sat, and said in surely the best and cheeriest voice in the world, "These are the new boys." Then he told the first to stand up. "Cotton, stand up and show yourself. Eversley—Eversley!—now you, Mitchell; Mitchell!" Carlisle stood up without being told to, and coolly surveyed the room. "Carlisle—and now you, Fenwick; Fenwick!" I sat down again with relief. All the new boys were blushing with embarrassment except Carlisle. He was never shy; and he now sat cracking his second egg, as though he were executing a *coup d'état* on the President of Mexico.

After tea we were shown to our dormitories by a white-haired and very lovable under-matron, and here we proceeded to undress with great nicety and not a little shame at being seen so scantily garbed by so many other little boys. At last out went the lights. The headmaster walked through the room with a cheery "Good night," especially directed to his newest and now rather lachrymose arrivals. Then sleep swept us all far into the night.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM MY PRESENT STANDPOINT

IN these days Cedric Carlisle was above the average height for his age, with dark brown hair growing low upon his brow, almost to within an inch of his eyebrows, and showing a point upon his forehead, from which the hair arched away. His eyes were dark



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

blue, and opened very wide if he were interested; and could droop sadly if he were dejected or bored. His nose was at this age distinctly buttonic. He liked everybody at first sight, and he was told by his Mother after he had grown up, that he had as a child the most engaging manner with perfect strangers, being at the top of his form in a train, or on the sands at Bournemouth, where he was quite ready to converse with anyone, and would regale somnolent trippers with a description of his home in Scotland, and invite them, fervently, to the loved spot.

Mrs. Carlisle was one of the fairest visions of my preparatory school-days. A kind of person "in sparkling raiment bright." She used to spend one week-end, if not more, of every term at Barcester, and leave a wake of coloured chalks, 4·7 guns, and chains with knives on them, behind her. Cedric adored her, and showed it by the greatest tenderness and love, for his selfish days were not yet. Everyone adored her, and at Barcester the only thing ever brought against her was that she looked like an actress; a bitter remark from an unfortunate youth whose opinion was biassed, his maternal parent, poor boy, looking as though she had been buried alive, dug up, and pulled feet-first through the key-hole.

In after years it was a saying of Cedric's that no one who wasn't pretty had any right to be anything else than mirth-provoking.

"Pure uggle I cannot endure," he would say, and then he would look at his Mother with the keenest satisfaction.

The rest of Cedric's family consisted of a father, a brother, and a sister. Captain Carlisle was a handsome man of forty-eight, just turning grey, and with a very keen sense of humour. He had an unrivalled genius for telling bed-time stories. The unexpected contingencies that arose in these tales! the familiar folk who were found tied to trees in the forest, or marrying the King's daughter! They ranged from Willie Pearce, the garden boy, to Minna, the Swiss maid, and they often culminated with



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

allusion to that pillar of chivalry and adventure, "Mivvens—the butler," who really was indispensable in all stories, more especially the well-thumbed sermon known as "The King's Dinner." This was a highly imaginative description of a Lucullan repast, which was invariably served by Mivvens.

This story was usually commanded by Francis, at this time aged four and a half, and already an enthusiast in the pursuit of zoology, gastronomy, and incidentally Topsy, the Pug. Her life he made an inferno by a warped sense of ownership, which took the form of tying a bit of string round her neck, and dragging her about, or being himself run away with. Francis loved and feared Topsy, for she would look very terrifying while running behind the nursery cart, tail a-curl, eyes a-goggle and tongue a-flap. So much so that he once described one of his nightmares to his Mother in which he mentioned "wolves coming like pug-dogs at me." A most sincere inversion.

Cedric's sister was a high-spirited young woman, a year older than himself, with the keenest likes and dislikes in the world, brown hair and a pretty questing nose. She was renowned through Downlandshire for her success in getting rid of the luckless women who came to instruct her in those branches of learning which wither with such unconscionable speed when the eighteenth summer comes; harbinger of dances, and tennis-parties, and suchlike delight.

I wonder will the reader pardon my deviating from the contemporary history of Cedric, and thus enlarging on his family? Remember, I had next to no family, and since my first intimate friendship with Cedric I have considered myself, and have been considered indulgently by them, a sort of honorary life-member of their home. You see I had only a Grandmother, and she could not be considered a permanency, and indeed proved it to be so in due season, for she died when I was sixteen. But the story has not yet reached that great year, not that my Grandam's demise was such a fête, but that our mutual sixteenth year was one of great



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

importance to Cedric and myself, as this tale shall in time unfold.

Now back to Barcester, please ; if you have not made the book into spills before now, kind reader.

### CHAPTER III

CEDRIC and I passed our first two years at Barcester in the usual way of preparatory schools. Our vocabulary became limited to school vernacular. Everything was "decent" or "piffling." Approval was expressed by "good egg" or "how beany," disapproval by "what a swizz" or "Feins I." Life suddenly became a chaos of football matches ; hero-worship of other scallywags whose skill with the ball was a by-word, fierce hatred of some masters, lukewarm liking of others, and guarded admiration of one or two. The acme of daring was reached by talking after "lights-out," or refusing to eat rice pudding at lunch. More than half the school wore no garters to their stockings, some wore one, a few wore two, these were the "nuts," and a silk handkerchief doubled their nuttury. "Mummy and Daddy" perforce gave way to Pater and Mater ; and anyone who was given an imposition was at once exalted in the eyes of his comrades, and figured heroically, as a Prometheus of daring.

Life was a thing of the present, a thing like a large football that rolled slowly through a fourteen-week term, and quickened its pace during the hectic weeks at home. Like a football it had a seamy side, but if kicked hard enough, this became less noticeable. The holidays occupied not much of our thoughts in the daytime in those early years, it was after "Lights-out" that each mind would silently concentrate on the condensed joy-time ahead, and become full of jostling ideas for the enjoyment thereof. Every conceivable pleasure was contemplated, considered, and then decided upon as essential to the impending



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

release. Ideals varied a good deal, from a trolly drawn by a St. Bernard dog, to a Rolls-Royce ; from a tent of dust-sheets erected on the lawn, to an imaginary castellated fastness at the bottom of the garden ; from an air-pistol firing rubber-tipped arrows, to a Colt six-shooter (as patronised by the heroes figuring in stories by Captain Mayne Reid). Every degree of practicable and impracticable inventive power was exercised in these pre-arranged thinks, to which it was usual to allot the first half-hour after "lights-out." Then slowly the clearly defined ideal would merge into the grotesque, the landscape would be marred by a schoolmaster in his gown appearing in a parachute, or the gardener's boy would be seen playing touch-last with a policeman ; then little by little it would become apparent that further resistance was useless, and the busy mind would fall asleep with much the same feelings as are experienced stepping from a hot-room in a Turkish bath to one a trifle cooler, with the added advantage of Time been suddenly, and legally—abolished.









*Now Jesu that dyest for us on the rood,  
And chrystendest Innocents in thy blood,  
By the pyer of thy moder good  
Bring us to blysse that lastyth aye.*



APPENDIX III

“FLOWER OF THE FIELD ”

OR

“ *HESTER* ”

BY

PAMELA GLENCONNER

JUNE, 1916

*“Man’s life is like the flower of the field,  
In the morning it is green and groweth up,  
In the evening, it is cut down, dried up, and withered.”*

PSALM XC.

*THE MOTHER*

THE budding branches spread their leaves  
To catch the gently breathing air,  
The Mother’s heart recounts her sheaves,  
Her harvest-sheaves of love and care,  
Her nine months’ joy of happy life,  
Of quiet dreams and blessed days,  
Of peace that even calmed the Strife,  
And steeped her in a golden haze,  
—A nimbus—of out-shed delight  
Whose source so deeply in her lies,  
As to give stature to her height,  
And visions that outshine her eyes.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

*O heart, that desolation knows,  
O couch, where hooded sorrows sit,  
O Mother's milk, that idly flows,  
And no soft lips to gather it.*

She rises with the rising Sun,  
Her bare feet brush the glittering dew,  
She hears the crystal waters run,  
The throstle with his note so true ;  
She sees the gentle listening hare,  
Come limping through the tangled grass,  
The kine, too indolent to stare,  
Or lift their heads to see her pass ;  
She sees the sun-light on the Ridge,  
She hears the swerving plover's cry,  
The water weeds above the bridge,  
The soft clouds sailing in the sky—  
Are each and all within her sight,  
A joy too poignant to be borne,  
She lifts both hands towards the light,  
That floods the fields of springing corn.  
Her thoughts rise with the mist's pale wreath,  
She watches sedge and osier grow,  
And murmurs, with exalted breath,  
“ *All this—all this—my Babe shall know.*”

“ *Hush,*” the wind to the flowers is singing,  
“ *Hush,*” it sings to the clovers deep,  
“ *Hush, Hush,*” to the tall grass swinging,  
“ *Fall asleep.*”

The days sweep by on burnished wing,  
The thrushes herald in the morn,  
The Mother's heart awakes to sing,  
“ *Soon—soon—my Baby will be born.*”  
Her joys of hope are manifold,  
No pen may write, no tongue may speak—  
“ *O patient love, soon—soon I'll hold  
The little hand against my cheek. . . .*”



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

What are the winds in the Ilex crying ?

*"Fruitless labour and garnered dearth. . . .*

*Why should the little form be lying*

*Under the earth ? "*

*"Hush—Hush "*—the scythes are saying,

*"Hush and heed not, all things pass."*

*"Hush—Hush "*—the scythes are swaying

Over the grass.

---

In woodland ways where no feet come,

Well hidden from all prying eyes,

A song-bird built her little home,

And brooded o'er her treasured prize.

She wove the rounded walls of moss,

Threaded it through with lichens grey,

She drew the slender strands across,

Toiling from earliest break of day.

The far-sought down she softly blent,

Lining the nest for hoped-for treasures,

And all her pretty ardour spent

Upon such little lovely pleasures.

Her toil was joy—no labour there,

Only devotion wholly given,

You'd say she'd be the angels care,

That God would smile in His high heaven,

But long before the summer set

The first red poppy in the corn,

That little nest was dank and wet,

Forsaken, broken, and forlorn.



## EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Silent the hearts that were born to sing,  
Silent the mate, the feathered lover—  
O frustrate hope, O drooping wing,  
With no soft brood to warm and cover.

---

THE Immortal Spirit is the wine  
That God has poured in earthly shard,  
But water mixed with bitter brine,  
The earthen cup has filled and marred.

The shining soul may lend her wings  
To speed Man's fallen pilgrim feet,  
But joys, too great for common things  
Lie with the stones upon the street.

The golden buds the summer shows  
Winter destroys and lays away,  
And the deep love the torn heart knows  
Is all the light of all our day.

*O couch, where brooding sorrows sit,  
The Mother's heart lies wan and cold,  
You'd say her grief had broken it,  
But O, how much a heart can hold.*







N'EFFEUILLEZ pas sur l'urne close,  
La fleur d'Aphrodite, la rose ;  
Mon fils n'a pas connu l'amour.

N'effeuillez pas non plus sur elle,  
La fleur des vieillards, l'immortelle ;  
Mon enfant n'a vécu qu'un jour.

. . . . .  
Si vous voulez, qu'au noir séjour  
Son âme descende, fleurie,  
Cueillez tous les lauriers dans les bois d'alentour,  
Mon fils est mort pour la Patrie.

*Gaston Vidal in "Le Pays."*



*Go your way, O my children, go your way, for my hope is in the Everlasting, that He will save you.*

*And joy is come upon me from the Holy One because of the mercy which shall come unto you from the Everlasting, our Saviour.*

*For I sent you out with mourning and weeping, but God will give you to me again with joy and gladness forever.*











## INDEX

- A., M., letter from, 268  
 A.-F., H. S., letter from, 270  
 Adeane, Charles, 205  
 Adeane, Madeline, 207  
 —, Adrian, 191, 231  
*Alien Sisters, The*, 121  
 Alston, Maj., 191  
 Amiens, 215-16  
 "Angel and the Innkeeper, The,"  
     248  
 Asquith, Raymond, 233, 239  
 Authors and books read, 63, 152-3,  
     159, 181, 194, 204, 206, 207,  
     218-20; list of books returned,  
     213-14  
 Ayscough, John, letter from, 255-8  
  
 B., C. E., letter from, 271  
 B., P., letter from, 262  
 B.-J., P., 166; letter from, 252-3  
 Baring, Guy, 218, 233  
 Bazin, René—*The Nun*, 152  
 Blackwood, Algernon, 204  
 Blore, Mr., recollections by, of  
     Bim at Winchester, 85, 97, 98,  
     114; letter to, 96  
 Blyth, T. J., letter from, 242  
 Books read, *see* Authors  
*Border Ballads*, 189, 205-6  
 "Boy Wonder," 118, 121; "Won-  
     der Boy," 264  
 Britten, Charles, 139  
 Brown, Hurst, 96  
 Burial under fire, 146  
 Burke, Bernard, 208  
 Bury, 190  
  
 Butler, Gen. Leslie, 205  
  
 C., H., letters from, 270, 272  
 Caravanning, 248  
 Carbery, Miss, 71  
 Carlow, 189  
 Cavan, Gen. Lord, 135; letter  
     from, 240  
 Cawn, Corpl., tribute to Bim from,  
     268-9  
 Church services at the Front, 128  
 Churchill, Capt., 233, 240  
 Clouds, 234; visit to (1913),  
     109-11  
 Constable, 197, 208, 210, 217, 222  
 Copper, 217  
 Cotton, letter to, 81  
 Curzon, Lady, 162  
  
 de Mareuil, Raymond, 188  
 d'Erlanger, Mme., 162  
 Dickens, Charles, 159; Bim's  
     estimate of, 189  
 Docé, 162  
 Dorking, Bp. of, 58  
 Drama, 63  
 Drew, Mgr., 216  
 Dug-out, 172  
 Dyer, Jack, 188  
  
 Elliot, Esmond, 188, 191  
  
 F., A., letter from, 269  
 "Fancies, The," 187, 189-91, 201  
 Farquharsons, 162  
 Fielding, Gen., 186



# INDEX

- Fitzgerald, Col., 162  
 Fletcher, Capt. (Flick), 127, 128, 139  
 Ford, Charles, 195 *and n.* \*  
 Fort, J. A., reminiscences of Bim  
   by, 114-15  
*Fragment of Autobiography, A,*  
   312-18  
  
 G., C. T., letter from, 253-4  
 G., E., letter from, 264  
 Games and sport, 51, 120; shoot-  
   ing, 68  
 Gatty, Charles—*Recognita*, 175  
 George, King, letter from, 243  
 Glen (1914), 120  
*Golden Book of St. John Chrysostom*  
   quoted, 19-20  
 Gordon, Mrs. John, 162  
 Gough, George Wyndham, 190  
 Greer, Eric, 187, 218  
 Grenadiers, vii; pride in the regi-  
   ment, 234-5  
 Grenfell, Monica, 207  
 Guitar songs, 206  
 Guns in action, 203  
  
 H., E., letter from, 269  
 Haig, Gen. Sir Douglas, 135, 190  
 Haking, Gen., 135  
 Hamilton, Col., 138  
 Havre, 127  
 Hay, Ian—*The Right Stuff*, 219  
 Heath, 190  
 Helbert, Lionel, 51; his estimate  
   of Bim at West Downs, 77-9;  
   letters to, 80-1  
 Hell-Kittens, 163 *and n.*  
 Heyworth, Gen., 135, 193  
 High Mass, 165  
 Hill, 70, 138  
 Hills, Miss, 52  
 Hohenzollern Redoubt, 145  
 Hood's poems, 55  
 Hornley, Michael, letter from, 114  
 Houston, Willie, 222  
  
 Houston-Boswell, George, 138  
  
 I., A. C. M., letter from, 264-5  
  
 Jukes, Corpl., 233-4  
  
 K., A. F., letter from, 271  
 K., W., letter from, 271  
 Kai Lung, 175 *and n.* †  
 Keats, 194, 205-6; "St. Agnes"  
   Eve," 166  
 Kremser, Mlle., 222  
  
 Lane, Surg., 195  
 —, Laura, 205  
 Layton, Bernard, 136, 208  
 Le Queux, Wm.—*The Lost Million*,  
   152-3  
 Leveson-Gower, Rosemary, 162,  
   195  
 —, Lionel, 162  
 Lomas, H. S., 186, 201-2, 210;  
   letter from, 272-3  
 "Long Leather Bag, The," 183-4  
 Lowndes, Lt. F. Selby, letter from,  
   240  
 Lumsden, Johnny, 207  
 Lyon, 146  
  
 M., letter from, 261-2  
 M., E., letter from, 268-9  
 M., M., letter from, 263  
 Machen, Arthur—*The House of*  
   *Souls*, 206  
 Mackenzie, Sloper, 162, 233  
 Macmillan, 128, 129-30, 134  
 —, Mary, 266  
 Maytham, visit to (1914), 120  
 Minnewerfer, 209-10  
 Mitchell, Mike, 223, 227  
 Morrison, Archie, 126  
 Motor-cycling, 116, 191-2, 194-6  
 Motoring, 118  
 MS. book, 214-15  
 —, Myrtle, 162



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Nairn, 146, 169

Nannie, 202

Ninette, 220-1

Norton, Richard, 162

Omar Kháyyam, 219

*Oxford Book of English Verse*, 207,  
229; marked poems in, 213

Parry, 163, 226

Parties, 5, 252

Pavlova, Mme., 209 *n.*

Pease, Jack, 222

Pelly, Alwyn, 138

Pemberton, Douglas, 139

Phin, W., letter from, 273

*Pilgrim's Progress*, 18, 214

Poetry composed by Bim, 9, 16,  
247; George Wyndham's estimate of, 23-4; its spontaneity, 255; rhymed letter, 173; his attitude towards it, 197, 204, 220

Poems written in childhood collected, 35-48; "The Lucky Dream," 36, 117; "The Wishing Well," 41, 117; "Oberon," 16, 42; "A Face," 23-4, 46

Poems written later collected, 279-307; dedication, 214, 218, 219, 225, 279; "Worple Flit," 189, 194, 280; "The Gazebo," 196, 285; "The Knight and the Russet Palmer," 217, 286; "The Nightingale," 204, 296; "Home Thoughts in Laventie," 173, 240, 306

Other poems and verses: "The Pirate and the Midshipman," 64; "Ballad of Sir Bedivere and the Pagan," 65; "On the Death of Sir Thomas More," 86; "Pan's Stepping Stones," 87, 115, 117; "I'll mention the matter to Mother," 100; "The Family Man," 100; "An Umbrella,"

101; "Come hail, come rain," 103; "Song of the Paunchy Prelate," 106; "Retrospect," 107; "Le Voyageur," 111; "I wish I could tell . . .," 112-13; Song: "What man is there . . .," 149; "Light and Darkness," 150; "A Bas la Gloire!" 151; "Re-incarnation," 182, 209

Poetry reading, 63

Ponsonby, Sir John, 186-8, 190

Ponsonby, Maj. Myles, 138

Poperinghe, 167, 169

Preston, Pamela, 198

Printer's errors, 183

Public-school life, 98-9

"Ralph the Rover," 63

Reading, *see* Authors and books read

Reading aloud, 159

—, Roger, 82

Roger, Samuel—*Table Talk*, 181

"Rosy Rapture," 208

Rumbold, Hugo, 162

Russian Revolutionary's estimate of Bim's last letter, 272

S., 80

S., F., letter from, 247-51

S., L. G., letter from, 269-70

S., O., letter from, 263

St. C., D., letter from, 271

Sargent portrait, 5, 233

Scotland, love of, 47, 74

Seymour, Lt.-Col., letter from, 239

Shell-fire, 147

Signalling corps, viii

Silk-worms, 311

Singing, 120

Sitwell, Osbert, 133, 141, 144, 146,  
148, 169, 172, 205, 218

Smith, Maj. Beckwith, 188

Songs improvised, 15, 17

Stanley, Sloane, 197



# INDEX

Stanway, visit to (1914), 120, 264, 266  
 Stirling, Jack, 207  
 Straker, Lawrence, 204  
 Streton, W. H., letter from, 241  
 Sutherland, Duchess of, 207  
  
 T., A., letters from, 263-4, 272  
 T., L. W., letter from, 267-8  
 Tennant, Christopher, 121, 128, 133, 135, 136, 164, 167, 173, 183, 197, 207, 221, 226, 228, 231, 233, 248  
 Tennant, Clare, 13-14, 221, 222, 266  
 Tennant, David, 52, 164, 165, 181, 221; Bim's affection for, 55, 218, 257, 259-61; diphtheria, 121, 173, 209; letter to, 131; his recollections of Bim, 259-61  
 Tennant, Edward Wyndham (Bim) —summary, vii-viii; infancy, 9, 271; early years, 10 ff., 221, 311; school-days at West Downs, 51 ff., 77-9, 81, 249; the village army, 74-5, 248; lonely excursions, 75-6; at Winchester, 85 ff.; visit to Clouds, 109-11; at Chelsea Barracks, 118; visits to Stanway and Maytham, 120, 264, 266; to Glen, 120; jaundice, 21; Marlow, 121; to France, 125; letters, 125-53; on leave (Nov., '15), 157-64; letters, 161-77; on leave (Mar., '16), 181-4; on Sir John Ponsonby's staff, 184 ff.; letters, 186-235; in action (15 Sept., '16), 231-3; death, 239  
 Appearance, 4-5  
 Characteristics:—  
     Activity and energy, 9, 18, 85, 102, 273  
     Ambidexterity, 10, 219  
     Beauty, insight for and love of, 14, 77, 253, 257, 263

Brilliance, 257, 264, 273  
 Charm, 3, 11, 12, 116, 252, 256, 264, 274  
 Child-heartedness, 184, 249, 255  
 Chivalry, 257, 258  
 Conversational aptness, 265  
 Courage, 78, 98, 102, 213, 263, 264, 273  
 Dramatic instinct, 79, 266  
 Fault-finding, distaste for, 16  
 Friendship, genius for, 3, 5, 79, 101, 118, 271  
 Generosity, 5, 98, 250, 267; talent for giving presents, 71  
 Happiness and contentment, 4, 9, 11, 14, 63, 235, 255-7, 264, 267, 272  
 High-spiritedness and gaiety, 73, 77, 114, 136, 138, 254, 262, 267  
 Home affection, 6, 56, 61, 73, 195-6, 253, 254, 256  
 Humour and wit, 3, 18  
 Lovingness and tenderness, 6, 19, 72, 261, 264  
 Modesty, 110, 257  
 Praise, love of, 262  
 Simplicity, 4, 98, 114, 254, 268  
 Sincerity, 4, 98, 114, 255, 273  
 Social instinct, 5, 110, 190, 258, 265  
 Spontaneity, 268  
 Sunny nature, 3, 113, 214, 262, 266, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273  
 Sympathy, 3, 12, 121, 258, 267, 268  
 Tactfulness, 99, 116, 252  
 Trustfulness, 117  
 Unselfconsciousness, 53, 256-7, 265  
 Vitality and joy of life, 6, 102, 118, 136, 249, 257-8, 263, 268, 272  
 Words, feeling for, 15, 18



# EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

- Father, attitude to, 54, 61, 164 ;  
relations with, 62, 265
- Handwriting, 202
- Homesickness, 51, 53, 79, 98
- Laughter, 4
- Mother, attitude to, 72, 128-9,  
166-7, 193-4, 196-7, 229-  
30, 250, 253, 258, 263, 267,  
270
- Religion, 6
- Tributes and recollections, vii,  
4, 5, 9, 102, 185-6, 239-42 ;  
by Mr. Helbert, 77-9 ; by  
Mr. Blore, 85, 97, 98, 114 ;  
by Mr. Hornley, 113-14 ;  
by J. A. Fort, 114-15 ; by  
F. S., 247-51 ; by P. B.-J.,  
252-3 ; by C. T. G., 253-4 ;  
by John Ayscough, 255-8 ;  
by David Tennant, 259-61 ;  
by M., 261-2 ; by P. B.,  
262 ; by Nurse, 263 ; by  
M. M., 263 ; by O. S., 263 ;  
by A. T., 263-4 ; by M. W.,  
264 ; by E. G., 264 ; by  
A. C. M. I., 264-5 ; by  
A. C., 265-7 ; by L. W. T.,  
267-8 ; by M. A., 268 ; by  
Corpl. Cawn, 268-9 ; by  
A. F., 269 ; by E. H., 269 ;  
by L. G. S., 269-70 ; by  
H. S. A.-F., 270 ; by H. C.,  
270 ; by W. K., 271 ; by  
D. St. C., 271 ; by C. E. B.,  
271 ; by A. F. K., 271 ; by  
A. T., 272 ; by H. C., 272 ;  
by H. S. Lomas, 272-3 ; by  
W. Phin, 273-4
- Tennant, Hester, 193, 196 ; poem,  
229-30, 321
- Tennant, Stephen, 165, 166, 193,  
195, 205, 217, 219
- Tennyson, Lionel, 187, 205
- Thackeray, Bim's estimate of, 189
- Thompson (of Nairobi), 222, 229
- Thousand and One Gems, A*, 181-2
- Tompson, Alan, 139
- Toys, 15, 72
- Trench-bombing, 168
- Trench life, 173
- Vidal, Gaston, quoted, 325
- Village army, 74-5, 248
- Villiers, George, 129-30
- W., G., letter from, 263
- W., M., letter from, 264
- Wales, Prince of, 129
- Ward, T. C., letter from, 241
- West Downs, 51 ff., 77-9, 81 ; the  
fight, 56-8
- Westmacott, Guy, 205
- Whibley, Ch., 175 n. \*
- White Company, The*, 61
- Willson, E., 222, 234
- Wilsford, 53-6, 60, 61, 192, 247 ;  
the village army, 74-5, 248
- Wilson, R. B., 163
- Windham, Wm., 112
- , Winnie, 162
- Wolkoff, 162
- Wyndham, George, 134 ; letters  
from, 23-9, 109, 111-12 ; his  
estimate of Bim's poems, 23-4 ;  
Bim's likeness to, 24-5 ; Bim's  
visit to (1913), 109-11 ; *Recogni-  
ta*, 175 ; collected essays, 175  
n. \* ; Bim's Dedication to, 279
- Wyndham, Sir Henry, 234
- Wyndham, Sir William, 112
- Yorke, Alfred, 205
- Ypres, 167-8, 172
- Zelle, 11, 221



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